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WE 2717

A PORTRAIT IN CRIMSON

TO
MY UNAPPEASABLE CRITICS,

*With a particular courtesy to that host of literary
Pounce-boxes who have thrown hot sand
upon my efforts to do them honor,*

I DEDICATE THIS VOLUME

*With the rash hope of some day meriting
their love, their admiration, and
a hearty hand-shake.*

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1889

*"Death be thy hater, pretty one!"
Said I. She only drew
Death's hour glass from his cowl and cried,
"I'll drain this glass to you!"*

A

PORTRAIT

IN

CRIMSON

A Drama Novel

BY

CHARLES EDWARD BARNES

New York

WELCH, FRACKER COMPANY

1889

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SHELDON FUND
JULY 10, 1940

A Portrait in Crimsons

A Portrait in Crimson.

I.

On the balcony of the Scalpel Club overlooking Madison square. Dr. Van Tassel discoursed prosaically over a compound refection of pathology, retrospection and Chartreuse, well mixed, to be shaken before taken, while several junior Scalpels bask in the sunshine of his pleasant vice with genuine content.

Wherein undissembled are set forth the experiences of a Doctor in search of his lares et penates in New York.

“Ah, yes, gentlemen ; the good-natured though quite dupable goddess of Friendship has in these half-hearted times a sorry task indeed to keep up the cult of her votaries. Steam and electricity are becoming most potent factors in our affairs of heart as in our commercial regime. These have diluted the

precious potion which this gentle goddess pours into our flattered cups.... thanks, not now, Doctor. I do n't care for a light. I never try to rejuvenate a cigar that has once died under my manipulation any more than I would a patient that had achieved the same embarrassing and stupid condition.... Yes, gentlemen, steam and electricity make it conveniently possible to claim friends in the four quarters of the globe ; yet, be this as it is, 't is ever at the expense of that blessed desideratum — sincerity : most relegated of virtues in our out-of-joint times. I long for the old friendships that history assures us once were ; the friendships that the homiletic old Euripides used to call blessings beyond riches or the power of monarchs for which popular applause is a poor exchange. Yes, so is it now that in place of these trusting, confiding, brotherlikest of friendships which revel in full length portraitures in history, secular and divine, and not altogether traditional, be assured, we have the brave, conscious heart domineered by an address-book, and this sweet quality which the Spanish romancers called a privilege

of the gods, now become one of the meanest spoils of this merciless war of convenience. Where men in the good times that are past looked into their hearts to scan the narrow catalogue of friendships, now they look into their ledgers. Our genial Snakes is a good fellow, but poor; but as soon as Snakes writes a clever book or paints an exquisitely original idea, Snakes goes down in ruddy vermillion in the catalogue which we hope will be published if we are ever knocked down in the street and effects that point to recognition are proclaimed abroad. Yet this same abominable Snakes has the audacity to wear turn-down collars and tight trousers when the prevailing fashion has relegated them; or Bradstreet puts the sign of a cross opposite his name on the public records, which cross, by the way, is meant to signalize anything but divinity: Silas John Snakes, his whilom address and all, are judiciously painted out in this portable catalogue of affections, and we know him not."

"Yes, Doctor, but the same steam and electricity which you maintain sort of universal diluters, are they not pro-

ducers as well? Have we not to thank them for their bounties rather than to scourge them for their thievery?"

"In a measure, yes. But it is the material idea which gets all the good when a new province of either of them is opened—not the spiritual. Every time you put an idea into a man's head, you rob him of putting it into his own. You will say he could not if he would; yet little could he do if he tried not. I do not deplore machines doing the scullion work of life, but I do resent their trespassing upon the province of the heart: how?—by turning night into day; by diluting the grand individual in the ocean of the mass; by demanding superficiality of great mind-factors because men swear they have time only for superficiality; by making slaves of women and machines of men; by crushing personality and glorifying mediocrity; by swarming the million, and forcing the gospel about the equality of all created beings over the line of civil rights into the secret province of intellect and affection. The new scripture is the scripture of convenience and policy; we think convenience, talk it, marry it. The

fabric of our social gospel whereon is written the passing progress, is mere pulp — a half masticated, undigested mass that falls to pieces to-morrow merely for lack of a substantial whereon to write the contemporaneous intellectual history. But let me not wander, nor grow preachy over what I was about to relate in the most genial mood of prosaicism: my experiences as a disciple of the prophet of friendship whose gospel I endeavored with some enthusiasm to disseminate. I thought me to be the richest of men in this respect when I stood on the steamer-deck the month after my graduation at the College of Physicians and Surgeons, counting the familiar faces as one by one my good comrades came forward and with heartiest handshakes and 'God-bless-you-Doc,' bade me bring home honors from Leipsic, under the shadows of which distinguished exotic they would one and all joy with me. But I had not been separated from them longer than the prescribed time for taking the honors they so devoutly wished me, before these same God-blessed friends began that cruel, invincible conquest which not the

most iron nature withstands—conquest by neglect, by indifference, by what you young latin-hungered bloods medicinally call *apathia in absentia* that conquest which, alas, for me, threatened the overthrow of all my intemperate Platonisms, and the remodelling of my affectional nature with something of a cold Stoicism contemporary with the times wherein I now was quite out of joint. My pleading letters to my old mates here at home, went unanswered for months, sometimes for eternity; and even the most sustaining of them bore the afflictive ring of a penance—something of the unadaptable obduracy of a bad boy forced to say his prayers. I soon realized, and to my crushing sorrow, how really far behind in this retributive current of affairs I had fallen; and, lest I be as one dead in this whirlwind of progression, and my fellow dismemberers of society at large require me to ingratiate myself anew into their reluctant graces, I packed my portmanteau and sped informally homeward."

"Well, Doctor, do you think yourself any the worse for it?"

"I shall not tarry on that question; but

I assure you, gentlemen, it required no inconsiderate amount of coaxing and recalling of the good old days, ever magnanimous in memory, to restore myself into their kind, unpurchasable esteem; but once so reimmortalized — you know our everlasting gods nowadays do n't last above a sixth month — there I remained. My first stroke of policy was to give the Scalpel Club a dinner — one of the modern symposia wherein every man was his own buffoon, parasite and orgist — yes, toasting each professing disciple of the skull and cross-bones with an individual good grace, assured them all in my salutatory speech that of all honors I had reaped at Leipsic, the philosophy of being true to my friends was the foremost; and so the chain, rent with such an unclassical force of circumstances, was welded together again, and the crack gilded over with the gold-foil from multitudinous champagne corks.

The next morning with a cabbage-leaf in my hat and a look of woeful stoicism that might have struck the beholder as if I had been rusticating in a tub with Diogenes for a fortnight, I sought the city

for an eligible apartment."

"I hear you have an admirable suite in twenty-ninth street, Doctor."

"In view only. It was my first imperial good fortune to find a very stately suite of rooms in the thin-air eminences of the 'Babel,' of whose cloud-bound turret I think I occupied a stratum somewhere beyond the teens in elevation; and though it gave me the vertigo to count the flats on this secular highway to heaven, to the utmost length of which the elevator hustled with the noiseless assiduity of a projectile, I was quite content for a time, till one day I was seized with the regardful fancy that I ought to know something of my personal whereabouts—the exact position of my window in this galaxy of windows which honey-combed skyward from the wretched pavements of thirty-second street. Accordingly I tied a red handkerchief to my window sash and took a plunge down the elevator to the street to ascertain where in heaven or in the place beneath my peculiar allotment held forth; but though I sat on an overturned ash-barrel and studied the thin, arrowy front of the 'Babel' from a

point of unquestionable vantage, I saw nothing of the red handkerchief. It was beyond the reach of my furthest vision. That same night, still undaunted in my desire to penetrate the clouds and learn my habitation, I set a lighted candle in my window and went below to discover it. I could see nothing of it; it had grown into a star of the twelfth magnitude — invisible to the naked eye. This I proved by happening fortuitously upon a mammoth telescope through which, from the opposite corner, an angular old *amicus Lunæ* was watching some celestial flirtation with abundant interest. I tapped the venerable star-searcher on the shoulder, and said, 'Sir, may I use this astral eaves-dropper a moment?'

'Yes; fer ten cents you kin,' replied the classic, lifting something of sarcasm over the rim of his huge spectacles. 'I'll give you twice that,' said I, vouchsafing the coin on the spot, 'only let me do my own steering, please. I am an old telescope and I want to dissect a particular sidereal cosmos in the *Via lactæ*.' He reluctantly consented. I turned the nose of this shabby star-monger against the

Babel, and soared upward from the first flat, left to right, right to left, up, up, up. 'Look a-here, young f'la,' said a pompous iconoclast in trousers of mammoth check, and huge diamond on his unravished celuloid shirt-front, 'don't yer know that yer got that-air pinto on them flats?' But by this time I had reached a safe climax. 'Eureka!' said I, 'I have found it at last.' 'Found what?' said the toothless old magian at my side, who had been gazing through a smaller glass all this while and had left me to myself. 'The star I have been searching,' said I, again staring at my window which seemed to hang in the heavens, and the disprited little candle laboring to cast its humble gleam of purity upon the haughty world, and at that. 'Let me see it!' said he. 'Make haste,' I replied, 'for it travels fast and will soon be out of range.' The old man bent double, bringing his shaggy brows over the muzzle of this unscientific improvisation, and closing his left eye with his hat, muttered a few guttural classics and seemed satisfied. 'Locate it for me, Professor,' said I. The natural American leaning toward titles coaxed

the old gentleman just beyond the dim borders of his professional good sense, when he replied gravely, 'ah, yes; remarkable star, that—very. Right ascension, forty-three, fifty-nine, twelve. It will soon cross the Great Dripper and enter the Conflagration of O'Brian.' I took the elevator to my rooms again, or in better English, it took me there—a stupid picture would it make: my lugging a huge elevator into my already crowded apartments—doing nineteen stories in nineteen seconds. On staggering to my room after all this sublimating balloon business, I wrote a tender yet unequivocal missive to my landlady—a patron of high-art, Wagnerism and short hair—and that very day, shouldered my grip and returned to the little wrangling world below. I felt much in humor of a young Vulcan flung from heaven after that terrible downward plunge, and after the vertigo had somewhat abated, I examined my watch which had already revolted against doing its duty in a vacuum, and sought a new home on the plain material earth. After many changes which were usually salutary in that they preserved

many of my ancient-grounded traditions regarding the rise of insipient Janitorism and the decline of the American criterion of hospitality toward Americans, I found myself about Christmas last snugly castled up in the happiest little apartment that ever created envy in the heart of a painter, whose hospitality I still enjoy.

I say 'painter,' for you perhaps remember Marks, whose appointment to a consulship to some interior insignificant town in Spain was the object of much debate in the Senate which nearly refused a confirmation of the President's desire. Some political dog raked up a squib which poor Marks' dead and buried father had written in stricture of that highly discreet and unforgiving body, and it proposed that the iniquities of the father visit the children, at least the first generation. By the majority of one, Mr. Marks, whom I am really beginning to admire as being everything divine save a good artist, goes to Spain next week, and I shall be ready for my friends' compliments, and begin a highly flavored series of ten o'clocks for their edification. The good fellow has left me in charge of his eastern tapestries

and hideously cultured curios, and I am merely a custodian at a high post, feeling my dignity proportionate to my sense of appreciation for the rare and the super-curious. But I have already begun relegating some of the more fragile exotics to the upper shelf, much to his discomfort ; for though he has not moved out, I have moved in, though not as yet assumed the sway. Yes, gentlemen, to his disgust, I may say, fearing that you, my good brethren in the kindly fellow-grip of the Scalpel Club might construe all this as rank apostacy, and resent my forswearing Hippocrates and Galen for Giotto and John Ruskin, at least in threatening appearances, I rolled a few skulls about, hung a jaw-bone on the chandelier, stood a mummy up in the corner, and otherwise decorating over the lovely decorations with lung-charts, pickled monstrosities and a telephone, — all of which has rendered the attendant goddess who prompts barn-door skies and bottle-green brooks into the heart of the latter-day impressionist helplessly withholding of inspiration to the young painter — I have managed to keep all the world at bay.

So, gentlemen, when this whiskered diplomat departs to take up his office in Spain as a regal defender of Western fetichism and republican equality — a thing he is mad enough to do on the meagre pittance flung dog-like at our illustrious standard-bearers abroad, I will bid you all severally and collectively welcome."

"That's something of a good-natured invite, Doctor, I must say."

"And all the more reason for your indulging me by complying with it. Well, gentlemen, I must take the seven o'clock for home. I go up the Hudson now daily till I am firmly established in my new quarters. My good mother enjoys it so, too — this little cessation of activities which leaves me quite communicative and approachable. By the way, boys, here comes Pippis. Discovered a new theory in regard to the inflexion of the *femera*."

"Indeed? Well, he comes from a bow-legged race ; no reason a man should n't be acquainted with his own mysteries and discover what he can't help carrying about with him day in and day out."

"Ah, like all young Doctors, you are critical. Let Pippis alone ; you will hear

from him later, and it will be as one speaking with authority...."

II.

Stephen Marks' studio in west Twenty-ninth street. The young painter and prospective diplomate over the easel delivering homilies into the abstracted ears of Dr. Van Tassel who sits moodily at the window.

Wherein the Doctor gives league to a quantity of bottled-up good sense which not the least dispassions the Consul apparent to the Spanish court.

"Yes, Doc, it is well enough for those who stand outside the solar system to criticise said system; but only that one who stands within it can give facts anything of their relative due. Of course, I do n't propose to turn the Alhambra into a Faro bank, nor assume another conquest of Grenada with Americanisms; but I do at least propose to teach those dulcified, nicotined Spaniards a thing or two that is native to my heart and hearth; for instance, how to stir up

a good cock-tail ; how to drive tandem ; bake beans and play poker. I have n't lived in vain, and had just as soon learn the art American demagogery as the art of Spanish duelling. Those Spaniards, from all I can gather, are good sort of fellows in their way ; but they want hustling. They want to be taught the limitations of *sang froid*, and the possibilities of psychological development in the science of football. I'll teach 'em all that. In the genial interval, I will laze in the Spanish sirocco, learn to twang the mandolin, and sing the love-songs of the old monkish times that the Cid prattles about. I don't propose to revolutionize, nor yet to be revolutionized in turn ; but I propose to make the best of life for those about me, and myself in the rebound, as it were."

"A very laudable resolve, Marks, at first blush ; but conscientiously I affirm that I have fears both for the community you propose to educate into the open oracles of American small vices, as well as for the man that proposes the innovation. To tell the truth, Marks, you are undertaking a perilous conquest, salient and free from care as is the humor which

paints triumph for you in such happy vermilions. To tell the truth, you have a hard row to hoe, if I may profane your classical mood with a New England proverb, and if you have not something of a private income, I admonish you to wholesome caution. It's a delicious dream — this feasting with dignitaries and wearing the eagle spread out over all your features and actions ; but it is n't policy, and policy is a savior of more men than piety in the affairs which solely concern men."

"You are half right ; and still Doctor, I do not exactly grasp the idea you would hold out to me."

"Well, it's something like this, my dear Marks : you are going to represent the United States in a foreign country. You are appointed by the President, the Senate confirms the appointment, your friends applaud and begin to toast you. You take half a dozen farewell dinners, and give as many more. You carry with you their hearty hand-shakes, and a pocketful of press-cuttings setting forth your happy gallantries, and the grace with which you will represent the glorious Union among the king-trodden, lord-trod-

den Spaniards. You go : ' God bless you,' everybody says—so do I. How then? When you get there, you call upon the present consul whose place and prestige you propose to usurp. You are astonished to find that instead of luxuriating on the corner of Fifth avenue and Twenty ninth street, as it were, he is living, dog-like in a Spanish Bleeker street; and a Spanish Bleeker street, my boy, is a place of infinite embarrassment to the tender-natured man who believes in the proverbs of soap and saintliness. Yes, you find him, and when the sort of asa-fœtida odor that clings about the whilom New Yorker now a dethroned autocrat, has hardened the olfactory apparatus, you look about you, and shift into 'the lean and slippery pantaloons,' which you not only find bagging indecorously at the knees, but about four sizes too redundant. You are dined, and dine in turn, resolving each time never to repeat the offense. You talk through a pompous interpreter who serves as a hole in the wall, as it were, and you wish him in the Saracenic Tophet a thousand times the first meal. One man, in gay uniform still redolent of

the benzine that washed away the stains of the last festivity, addresses you in French. You poke this hole-in-the-wall beside you, and tell him that you beg to inform the most excellent honorable who has graced you with an inquiry in an unknown tongue, that you are quite ignorant of his desires. Next you are plied in German by an exceedingly diplomatic institution on your left who etherealizes your visions of Spanish beauty into the thinnest vapor. You poke this hole-in-the-wall again, and the most gracious lady whose title you neglect to consider, is amazed and disgusted. A pair of glaring eyes opposite suggest a duel for daring to speak of the royal personage without cognizance of her title, but he cools somewhat, refraining to cast a glove into your face upon being told by a stunted piece of super-diplomacy at his side that the Signor Americano — merely a 'harmless necessary cat,' knows but one tongue, and not yet one courtesy. Thus, Marks, you grow to be a hermit, borne down by all these cares, and the discharging of servants in order to meet the economies exacted, till you and poor hole-in-the-wall

are left alone. Then comes a formidable document from Washington which sets forth that whereas Deacon Hands, of Winnepesaukee, Idaho, wishes to know how they grow beans in Spain, you will please hunt the records and report. That takes fourteen days and four dollars for fees to the public servitors, and you wish Deacon Hands was in the hands of a vigilance committee on horse-stealing. Then comes a poor woman with thirteen necessarily unlucky children, who beseeches you on bended knees to send her back to America whence she came in search of her husband who deserted her. You do n't smoke for a month in order to permit the exchequer to despatch her and her retinue homeward. Then you get an official — terribly official document from Washington enclosing your list of official necessities allowed by the government from public funds, which plethoric list is full of red ink X's opposite the indited articles. 'Five chairs,' curtailed to 'one chair.' 'A book-case' struck out altogether. 'Two desks,' one for hole-in-the-wall and the other for you, curtailed to 'one desk;' hole-in-the-wall must sit

on the floor. 'Two antique paintings,' struck out. 'Case of decanters' struck out twice and red-inked through the very backbone: prohibition administration. 'Carpet' struck out: mats good enough. 'Cigars for diplomates' struck out; administration do n't smoke. Then comes a long series which was evidently struck out with a white-wash brush, a score at a time, including 'books, rugs, tapestry, stationery' and all the decencies of diplomatic life. Thus you are left with a bill of three thousand two hundred dollars on your hands, of which only sixty is allowed; and your sumptuous Eden where must flutter the poor little eaglet of liberty now with her feathers clipped and a wild disconsolate look in her eyes, is carted back to the inevitable whence it came, and nothing but a desk, a chair, a bottle of ink, and a quill allowed you by the glorious government which you swear by so loyally in after-dinner eulogium, and swear at throughout the sleepless night. Then comes in the bill for this sixty dollars already allowed. You draw a draft; the draft is repudiated; why?—because the appropriation has run out and

Congress has adjourned for four months. Daily for four months comes a chair-maker, a desk-maker, and a stationer, on a mission of vengeance, and you are obliged to double the salary of the hole-in-the-wall to insure his defending you. And so the wheel goes around, and a new president comes into office to your relief, and another Stephen Marks about your once inflated but now severely attenuated size, comes to usurp the throne which you yield him without a struggle, borrowing enough money from him to get home. You have spent six thousand dollars more than you have got, by endeavoring to maintain the American eagle abroad on the salary of a common office-clerk : eleven hundred dollars a year."

"Eleven hundred a year?"

"Yes, sir ; do you think you can survive on that ? If so, well and good ; if not, and you have neither income nor good friends to back you, resign while there is yet time. . . . But while you are suffering the inertia of this wholesome disillusioning, dear fellow, I want you to enlighten me upon a matter which has quite enveloped me in mystery for the past few days

rather exclusively. The other afternoon while you were toasting your colleagues at Martinelli's, I was here — here just where I sit now, before the open window fostering a green cigar and gazing vacantly at the long rows of back windows of the houses across the yards opposite. Now, almost on a level with my eyes, Marks, perhaps a trifle lower, there are two large windows, half curtained within with graceful tapestries. I endeavored with very unwarrantable curiosity to peer into them ; but of course it was quite impossible. Suddenly I was aroused from the estrangement of the moment by the appearance of a young man at the window : a finely, delicately proportioned young fellow, with a pale but very interesting face, who parted the tapestries and stood with his features close to the wide panes. He had a mallet or some such implement in his hand, and a graceful Persian serf-cap on his head. Suddenly he turned his eyes full in my direction with a steady, questioning glance, then his face brightened as with a most rapturous impulse. Then smothering, as it were, this first surprise of greeting, he stared longingly,

most curiously, interested and interesting at the same moment, into the apparent vacancy before him. Now upon what or whom could this mad young rhapsodist be staring with such evidences of a passionate thought disclosed upon the blazing feature? It perplexed and more than all, interested me; and has continued so to do ever since. Suddenly he changed position, Marks, and for the first time I felt conscious that his eyes were upon me. He had caught me eaves-dropping upon his pretty secret, and with that apprehension, his face changed from the blood-heat frenzy of the lover, to a cold, contemptuous stare, as if a ravishing frost had killed those summering looks, and defiance and injured innocence taken the place of all the gracing glances that betray the heart of the enchanted, — the abandoned to the fever of an ecstasy. Yes, I had dropped upon this holy secret, and he knew it. Instead of withdrawing, I drew still closer. Then, with a parting mutter, he vanished. Strange, was n't it?"

"Well, yes; it does seem so, Doc, as you related it, embellished with something of your own fervency. But here!

look at this. My last dash before I am off for Spain."

"Oh, 't is, eh? The same old grind, Marks, the same old grind that has been worked off on us inartistic Americans for years: that sickly landscape by gaslight: a dash of red and yellow: a cheap Lorraine sky: a gangrene Turner foreground: a sun just tobogganing down the cotton clouds over the horizon as if only too glad to get out of such a muddle, and behold—Fame, ten thousand a year, wife, diamonds, villas in Spain—bah! Marks; of what unorthodox simplicity are your painters' dreams. Why, bless me! if we poor devils raised the reckless havoc with our scalpels that half you painters do with the brush, why, we'd kill off the whole human race in a decade."

"Well now, Doc, I like that sort of iconoclasm—does me good. It's so scholarly, you know, so—eh, so of the brain brainy, don't you see. You men of Æsculapius seem to think that all the world is a morgue, and all the men and women merely anatomical puppets, to paraphrase an oracle. Now that's not real nice, do n't you know; kind o' vulgar—kind o' seedy.

One don't like ever to be approaching the man whom he knows constantly soliloquizing upon his anatomical shortcomings and amenities with a view to getting at them some day. That's not real delicate, don't you know, to say nothing of being humane. When you doctors do a bad job, you bury it, and done with it."

"And when you artists do a bad job, you hang it—hang it in the Academy. *We* are the more humane; we bury 'em and done with it; you hang 'em and then bury 'em. See! I think I'll get some of my literary fellows to paraphrase poor Lamb's classic, 'On the Inconveniences of being Hanged'—in the Academy—but ho! I say, there he is: same fellow, Marks. See him? Why do n't you look this way? See! same fellow, Persian cap, blouse *a negligè*, distinguished pose of the head. Do you know him?"

"Well, yes; at least, by sight—by reputation, I might say. He's a modeller in clay—a sculptor. Famous too some day if his pluck holds out. He's got the idea, and a grand one too. It's too bad he's such a hermit though."

"But what's his name?—where is he

from? Is he a New Yorker, or a foreigner?"

"Neither, I believe; came from over the hills—from the west somewhere. A native genius, full of western vim and talent. I think he'll do something gigantic yet if the glimpses of his work which I have seen betoken the promise that I think they do, and that promise is fulfilled.... Oh, his name?—not a very startling one: Maynard...."

III.

The same apartment, the sole occupancy of which is now devolved upon Dr. van Tassel. A host of younger members of the Scalpel Club enjoying the Doctor's hospitality in pursuance of the invitation on the balcony some weeks previous. Crackers, cheese, cigars, sherry, and a general good cheer pervading.

The Doctor grows communicative about the strange Maynard case, and holds his hearers spellbound.

"Yes, gentlemen, the young painter, Marks, by name, has gone to take up his high role of diplomacy and druggery in some miserable little inland Spanish town, and I have taken up the fabric where he left it, adding a thread or two of my own quality, as you perceive. In this general *esprit* fallen so luckily upon my shoulders, I am now finding my Elyseum, which you, gentlemen, must enjoy with me. It may be that the necessary implements of my profession have not heightened the artistic warmth of the place, and indeed some might think the picturesqueness somewhat desecrated; but my conscience is free, and as long as

my name on the door is pompously es-cutcheoned with an 'M. D., LEIPSI^C,' I can appal the world. Have another *Kimmel*, — no?"

"No, thank you, Doctor. I want to hear this affair of the young sculptor. I just got a glimpse of the facts from Whippley whom you let into the secret. Come now; is it so remarkable a case after all?"

"Yes, in more ways than one. He is a most astonishing young genius, this Maynard. Has been afflicted with what Bucknill calls delusional ecstasy. But he'll come to the surface all right. The whole affair has been such a shock to me, and above all, the interesting phases which have since developed have all accrued to make matters really historical in the van Tassel chronicles as far as I am concerned."

"Well, well; but you do n't elucidate: you don't materialize —"

"Well, now; you take it quietly, Doc, and I will do the best I can. First, who will have another hunk of Roquefort, or a cracker — anybody?"

"No, we want to hear about the May-

nard case. What's become of your interesting patient. Is he in town?"

"Oh, dear no; I had to sneak him out of the city the very same night. If I had n't, he would be languishing in the city-prison hospital now, instead of browsing up the Hudson in my old home, with my good mother and two sisters attending him so bountifully. No, I did n't risk that. I hustled him out as soon as possible; and thank heaven, he'll stay hustled till this tide of inquiry begins to ebb."

"But hold on, Doc, do n't begin at the end and crawl backward like a crab; just take the initiatory idea and build like a faithful historian —"

"All right; but mind you must have patience, and then at the end, perhaps I will show you some interesting documents."

"That's capital! . . ."

"Particularly so, as one of them — the most interesting I may say, is in a woman's hand-writing."

"No! — whose? —"

"That's what I am putting my days and nights into a pillory to solve. Perhaps you can solve the secret for me."

The first day of my acquaintance with Mr. Marks, whose birthright I have here for a time conditionally assumed, I sat before this very window, gazing vacantly out, exploring with something of a fanciful eye the not too penetrable back-windows opposite. Suddenly there appeared at a very spacious window almost directly on a line with me, a young man whose whole presence bespoke a history. I was so attracted from the first ; not for any reasonable contingency of things of wonder or mystery, but the whole fine portraiture was lighted up with a supernatural glow from within, as he stood before the broad window gazing in my direction as upon some profound altar-place of his art and aspiration. There was a most perplexing, most pathetic look in his eyes that held me spellbound. His features blazed one instant as with a most rapturous impulse, the next, quickly dissembled as if it betrayed too much ; then a quiet, scholarly repose fell upon the dim outline, — a somewhat deep, longing and tender that would not be concealed. Now, thought I, upon whom could this earnest young dreamer be gazing with

such evidences of a quivering heart in the open oracle that spoke from every feature? Was it a real being, or merely a fiction?—an adored and adorable object tangible and gifted of sense and beauty, or merely the fever of a rhapsodist's dream? Suddenly our glances met; that frenzied gaze gave way to a passionless, demanding stare which was meant to interrogate me with no-lenient eye to my impertinence. Then he withdrew. And so for days these delicious innuendoes grew to be a cherished part of my day's study, and I was often tempted to throw aside the sly curtains through which I watched him with such unreserved interest, and salute him with a kindly glance or a wave of the hand. And so the enchantment grew, till this spectacular monologue suddenly took really serious aspects, and I resolved to disenchant myself by fully satisfying the stupid caprice. It was about four days ago, that, more than ever stirred to the purpose, I left my work, and sought out the little optician around the corner. The little rheumatic man of lenses, complying with my demand, dealt me out a number of workman-like field-glasses, and

the clearest, strongest of these became a moment later, a part and parcel of my own taxable estate. I met you, Mr. Sprik, do you remember?—on returning. We dined together, so that it was nearly seven o'clock before I reached my room."

"I think I do remember a bit of mystery hanging about a package which you coddled indulgently at the time. But let that pass, Doctor; go on. This is growing interesting."

"Well, gentlemen,—do have another cigar, Whipstar. Don't stand on ceremony....

Yes, I came back to my rooms, laid the glass aside, resolving to pursue investigations on the morrow, since the day was done and my present opportunities with it. I sat by my window, however, and in the delightful interregnum period betwixt the fall of day and the reign of night, began reconsidering certain data in the new theories regarding structural histology, and wondering whether I should go up the Hudson to my old home that night, or wait till the morrow, surprising my good mother on her birthday. Suddenly I glanced over into the windows of my

man of mysteries opposite, and was surprised to see the curtains well parted, and a faint light in the studio — enough to illumine the outlines of things within, and give them a scrutable shape and feature. So I procured my field-glass, drew it out to the resemblance of the brazen serpent of Moses, and availing the back of a chair for a tripod, levelled the powerful lenses upon the broad, clear windows opposite. The success was exhilarating; I nearly shouted with joy at the quiet triumph. Even in the faint glimmer I could distinguish well the lay of the apartment, and, aside from some apparent inconsistencies of perspective, the whole was a solved problem. I think my delight was at its warmest when to my intenser interest, the young sculptor entered his studio from a room beyond the reach of my glass. In his right hand he bore a bright taper which flickered alternate gleams full into a most perplexing face; he stumbled clumsily I thought, and altogether his whole aspect at that serious moment was a most startling study. He turned about, closed the door where he had entered, locked it, touched the

candle to the chandelier, and instantly the room was ablaze with light. Then retreating a few steps he sat the candle stick on a pedestal near by, and stood still, gazing into vacancy as if solving some problem, the purpose of which was a matter of life and death.

To what can I liken that face? Even now, so vivid is the passionate recollection, I see that bended figure at the pedestal in the solitude of his little wonder-world, gazing upon some phantom of his brain, or into the stern fact so long flattered of fancies, which now proves a thing of dust—a precursor of sorrow and despair. What could have so stung the young hermit?—what circumstance hunted him down to this extreme anguish? What meant this look of a fiend upon a feature calm as the son of Zeus and Latona a few hours before, now bitter beyond expression? Certainly the meaning of all this was beyond me. Suddenly he snatched a paper from the bosom of his blouse, unfolded it, and with frame quivering, read it with wide-parted lips, and then—the spell broke, and he buried his face in the folds of the mysterious

missive, turning aside and so disappearing behind a tall cabinet at his right hand. This movement gave me a moment of rest from the straining task, and a chance to study the room more closely.

It was rather a spacious studio, hung with tasteful tapestries, lined with fragments of antique sculpture and many finished works of his own, besides rendered homelike by a Florentine cabinet or two, and a wide divan luxuriously pillowed. There was a stolid-looking manikin, and the floor was strewn with chips, lumps of plaster and tools—the ideal haunt of an indolent, scholarly master. Suddenly a flaring white light from behind the cabinet threw a concentrated ray upon a clay figure on its pedestal in the center of the room. This superb, half finished piece of art was the portrait of a young woman beautiful as a vestal and crowning in her calm grace as a Lydian minstrel. This then was the masterpiece within which he seemed to have bound up the compass of his triumphant days. This then was the labor of his love. I studied the fair attitude some moments before the young sculptor appeared, but he came anon,

picked up his tools and gathered his sleeves at the elbows ready for the task. He lifted his arm above his head, raised his eyes ; but the ambition fled at the climax of the resolve and so conquered, the nerveless hand fell listless at his side. He stood staring the holy image with features portraying a far deeper impulse than mere contemplation, facing the calm idol—this one pillar about which resolved his whole rapturous world — and then turned aside, sweeping his fingers over his white forehead as to shut out that crushing vision, be it madness or revealment, and so sank at last into the broad arms of an old Venetian chair before the cabinet. Again he drew forth that letter from its hiding place upon his bosom, regarding it with pathetic earnestness. There was a little convulsion, a struggling to his feet, and then with one dash of resolve the little missive was torn into a thousand fragments and crushed beneath his feet.

I drew the glass from my straining eyes. For a moment I thought I was blind, so blunted were my senses, so giddy my brain, so full of distracting hallu-

cinations. This was but the leading to a climax. I felt that all this was yet to herald something of a more serious surprise. I almost stood in awe of my own prophecy. Again I lifted my glass, and again was the young hermit's lair brought up, it seemed, to my very side. I was just in time; the crisis I had predicted was at hand. The sculptor appeared, — oh, what a countenance was that! Despair, hopelessness — defiance lashing him on — on to the fatal extreme that should end all. The huge mallet was already poised high above his head; his quivering lips were parted; his eyes blazed with the frenzy of a madman, and hurling his whole dissolving passion into this one disenchanting blow, the mallet fell, and the idol of his strange worship was dashed into ten thousand fragments. Then, half as by exhaustion, half perforce of the spent blow, he plunged forward and fell even at the feet of his own shattered shrine!

I shrank back, closing my eyes. I understood it all. Who need seek me out to tell me the secret of this pantomimic mystery? He loved, and the labor of his

love was lost! That sweet image he had so worshipfully set up in the solitude of his own temple, now lay a mass of curst and formless fragments, and all was over. It was some moments before I dared lift my eyes again, but when I did, I saw that the young man had risen from the floor and sat before the old Florentine cabinet.

He drew down the desk, and sat staring an open journal before him. It seemed to invite the burden of his misery, and hesitating no longer, he fell to his task like a tiger and wrote—wrote the interpretation of his leaping heart with most confident hand. Page after page he bounded over as if he were forcing an ocean of thoughts through the eye of a needle, his hand dashing on, on, on, leaving great lengths of recorded violence blurred and bitter with tears. These few moments were beyond all the world wonderful to me ; but little did they herald the crisis that was to come. Indeed, so intense and complete was each moment in itself, I could not have cast a thought or prophecy before, nor been convinced that the end was not here. Suddenly the strange man paused, even as if his thoughts had

halted in their impetuous careering, or his mind clogged and dazed into utter imbecility. His face from what I could gather had lost its enlightening aspect. It was vapid—dead; and like a child he toyed with his fingers as if his nerves were completely benumbed. Then at last recovering, he rose from his seat, glared at the written oracle before him as if it were all a lie, and while telling more than it should, told not one half. With a wave of contempt he jammed the quill into the sand-box at his right, straightened stiffly, opened the doors of the cabinet and from one of its secret shelves took down a blue vial, dropping back heavily into his chair. There was a most abandoned picture of anguish upon his face as he held at arm's length the thing contemplated,—a peering into the eternal through this liquid solvent, even as if he beheld in its calm, blue depths the fixed eye of Death gazing yearningly upon him. Without once lifting his eyes from the devilish enchantment, he snatched a tiny cup from a shelf beyond, and tipped the contents of the vial into it. I grew apprehensive; my heart beat with a violence

that unnerved me. I dared not lower my glass ; the mystery was at its height. Suddenly the young hermit lifted the cup and his lips parted to an impulse—perhaps a laugh of devils, perhaps the curse of a mortal—and even as if to perform a friendly libation to the shattered goddess at his feet, he closed his eyes and swept down the liquor with a single draught, gasped, choked and fell prostrate to the floor.

“My God, he has drunk the poison !” I cried, the exploded conviction ending in a guttural hiss ; and then leaped from my seat and staggered about the lampless room, falling over chairs and tables and finally reaching my cabinet. Suddenly I halted in my resolve. Could not all this be but a mere vision—only a fiction of the mind ? But ah, that awful face and form rose out of the gloom confronting me, and I hesitated no longer. Snatching open the glass doors of my cabinet with such violence that one of them fell with a crash, I seized my emergency case, dashed at the chair where hung my coat, burst open the door, darting down three flights and into the street before I realized

where I was going or how I was to reach the field of action. But I took up the task, rushing on down the lighted street, and ere I realized my peril, plunged full into the arms of a burly policeman.

‘Wher y’ goin’?’ he commanded, snatching my coat from which I slid, leaving that part of my apparel in his astonished grasp.

‘Wat y’ got der, young feller ? Gimme that thing !’

‘Let me alone,’ I commanded. ‘I am a doctor : I have a patient around the corner, and he is—dying. Don’t delay me a second. Let me go!....Do n’t believe me ? Then come along and I’ll show you.’ And with the big policeman at my heels, I flew to the next street. My calculations as to the house was something of a revelation, I verily believe. I seemed to recognize the right door by a mere instinct, and ran up against it violently. Some one was just passing in or out at the time ; I darted by him, and up the stairs, followed by the man at arms, and soon stood bewildered in the silent hallway. Which way to turn I knew not. A card on a door at the end

of the hall signalled me. I rushed up face to face with it : it dealt out the precious tidings,

—MAYNARD : SCULPTOR—

Some one within heard my heavy fall against the door and hastened to open it. It was an old woman.

‘Where is Maynard?’ I gasped.

She was so frightened she could not answer.

‘Maynard—quick ! Where is he ? He is dying. I am a doctor ; perhaps I can—good God ! do n’t stand gaping at me.’

Suddenly I grasped the situation and the lay of the apartment. Rushing up to a door I hissed back to her, ‘here?—here?—is he here?’

She only nodded, her white face immovable with fright. I did not wait to try the door ; I knew it was locked. I simply dropped my tools and hurled my shoulder against the frail panels. The door gave way and I plunged forward, falling headlong right at the feet of the young sculptor as he lay in a stupor at the base of the great cabinet. One look at his face, one whiff of the blue vial, and the secret was mine. I knew just what

to do and how to do it. He had taken enough poison to kill an ox ; the overdose was his saving. The old woman regained her senses at last and came to my assistance. It was the work of but a few moments to restore the young man to consciousness, and after a heroic massage with repeated dousings of cold water, I started the bewildered patient on a race through the apartment in the custody of the big policeman who was now proving a valuable *aide* in my tactics. Then I hurried back to the studio, dashed the evidences of the sculptor's madness out of sight, and gathered up the fragments of that mysterious letter. The ink on the pages of the journal outstretched before me, was scarcely dry. I realized how swift had been my rescue when my finger-touch blotted the page. I thought these hurrying events had consumed an hour. I drew the curtains before the windows to insure my task against the possibility of being watched by as interested a tele-scopist from an opposite window, and then began my search about the room. The force of the sculptor's disillusioning blow was so great that only a few traces

of the beauty of the figure remained to give an adequate outline, but there were numerous little hints among the chaotic ruins that led me into a maze of curiosity. I turned from the paradox however, and led the way to the sculptor's chamber. He lay up on the pillows in a sort of half slumber rather the result of exhaustion than the poison. The good, commiserating old woman was at his side, rubbing the white temples and contemplating the fine but heavily troubled features of the young man, and then I made plain to her all I dared. I told her that he had made a mistake in taking some medicine, and the overdose had somewhat affected his mind. I smoothed the ruffled sensibilities of the dear old lady, and felt myself justified in keeping the leading secrets from her. Once more I entered the studio, this time securing the door behind me as firmly as the shattered lock would permit, and straightway took up seriously the chain of investigations. Do I weary you, gentlemen? — It's all so vivid I can scarce pass by a single recorded moment."

"No, Doc: go on. It's so delightfully

animated, don't you know. You suit the action to the word. Go on, go on."

"Well, I must confess it was something of a struggle to pursue what I felt to be my plausible duty ; but my heart being prompted of a higher motive, I felt justified in solving the affair that I might perhaps better the condition of the patient.

I threw the door of the cabinet wide with a single utterance of resolve, and the whole matter stood before me as with open arms and lips parted to the oracle. The first task of this premeditated moment was to pour into the sewer the contents of the blue vial—that root of the evil labeled with sundry skulls and glaring admonitions—and then the crumpled letter blotted with the tears and sweat of anguish and remorse,—this historical little missive which seemed to prove the denial of his passport into his new-found Olympus—commanded me, and I collated the sweet-scented fragments. At the very threshold of this task I hesitated, and in the quandary, hid the letter under the open book. This self-confessional, which read more like the soliloquy of an imaginary being than the real evidences of a

young hero's enchantment, startled me ; it was so complete a clew to all that had so mystified me. I have it here, see ! I will quote for your edification some of the leading lines ; they will require no commentary, I assure you. Listen :

'Oct. 3—Solitude has made a veritable Stylites of me, infusing my veins with this delightful devils-draught which God knows shall yet prove my bane. In this severe estrangement I have become a mere creature of sensation ; the common mediums of approach, man to man, are seemingly withered up in the tropic heat of my imaginations, till I become a sponsor for and an advocate of my fictions, — an idolizer of these very conceits.... *unintelligible*).

Oct. 5 — I saw her at her window again to-day. God ! how I trembled. Can it be that she is really all I picture her ? How she noted and approved these glances of mine which can but reveal that which I dare not speak even in whispers to my own heart ? What am I saying ?— what am I writing ? 'Down, down, thou wilful tyranny.' Betray me with a kiss into crucifixion.... Is this the end of

all this petting of delusions? God forbid!

Oct. 7. — She came twice to the window this morning. O God! what a face is that. Whither shall it beckon me? Is it heaven in reality,—in the light of that divine feature, or only a mad vision,—a veil concealing the yawn of hell beyond it?... But hush this violence.... what am I saying? This will not do on paper.... I have the new glass at last; it is most powerful—twice as strong as the old one. I can see even the color of her eyes if the day be clear and the light.... Alas, what fool's food are these supplicating prayers! This morning I thought she smiled when our eyes met, but that face soon resumed its pale repose. Oh, to have told her with a single look, — one word unutterable of tongues.... my holy secret. But how do I prattle on? How dare I such impertinence in the face.... How dare I magnify my petty visions till they challenge me.... How madly improbable that she should regard me as I do her. I, a creature of solitude, she, one of the world, one with heaven. She has never heard my voice, pressed my hand.... but what matters that? Love hath no lan-

guage, nor lovers names....

Nov. 3.—I cannot work ; I can do nothing but sit there at the window and watch, watch for her coming, hour after hour, dream, hope and wonder. Poor old Charlotte, God bless her kind heart, grows melancholy over my condition.... In love with what ?—with whom ?—with what assurance ? How shall this end, and where ? I dare not pause and reason.... I began her portrait to-day. I shall learn that face, — learn to hate it if it be in my power. I shall model it and so weary myself of it, — kill this aching, penitential uncertainty.... So be it....

Nov. 7. — The portrait is doing very well. I seem half enchanted with my own creation ; the image of the divine one. It seems as if she were with me even now breathing forth compassion from the lips of that dumb, cold clay. What madness is this ? Think of my talking to, entreating and caressing a heap of clay — a vile handful of dust, smoothing back those counterfeit locks from the stone forehead with such reverent affection. And still, what more are we all, — any of us, the best and the least : dust. Poor, cold,

proud, damned heaps of corruptible clay are we all, —all save one. Why should not I love her image then when it typifies the imperishable? God made the woman, and God too made the image, since he endowed me with these gifts. What am I saying? This is all sophistry,—over-refined, satanic treason to the very justifiable spirit that would....

Nov. 24.—I have begun the new portrait. I found that I failed to reproduce with satisfying exactness a peculiar angularity at the temples, and rather than attempt a correction, I have laid the old one away in the Florentine chest. This one will correct the faults of the old, and harmonize the qualities a little more sensitively.... I can even see the delicate tracings of the veins on her temple when she leans forward to the window pane. The glass is astonishingly true. I wonder if that is her brother who reads to her on Sunday mornings.

Dec. 1.—What means all this, and whither shall it all lead me? I thought I could weary myself of that face by counterfeiting it in clay. But no; the longer I study it, the more I realize its

quality sunken deeper and deeper into my poor heart, till now, — now I live in that aureola of divinity, and am thankful so.... But I must shake off this sack-cloth of solitude....

Dec. 3.—No, no: it is of no use. The world hates me and I shrink from the faces of men as if they were apparitions dogging my steps. The gaping streets look like great earthquake rents swarming with human animalculæ.... Solitude has done this. The fresh air strangles me; men's voices are all discord, and their eyes seem glowing with that damnable fetichism which drives me back shuddering to my lair again.... Oh, if I could only see her, meet her — hope for her. She could restore me, — stop up this open wound.... and restore my mind. Great God! what means this? Why should I not tell her my secret? Am I ashamed.... I slept in my chair before the window last night. I dared not stir: it seemed the world stopped moving and the night perpetual. What mad visions are these! This cannot last long.... Now quick before these damnable things come back to torture me. I shall defeat them

yet. What woman would be dishonored by an honest confession of love?.... It is my only cure, and my resolve.... is final.

It is done! Good God! she cannot refuse this cry through the darkness....' This, gentleman, ends the journal to date."

"A remarkable chronicle, Doctor. I declare if it does n't all have the ring of incredible fiction."

"Yes, gentlemen, I am forced to concur with you. And the deed whereof he speaks so pathetically, was done: a stupid blunder impossible to be rightly understood by the most feeling and sympathetic woman under heaven. But I blest her in my heart even for so much charity when I read her reply. Here it is: see! a delicate, firm, womanly hand. This is the document upon which I shall expect you to expatiate at full length. Let me read it—

'Sir: Your very strange, but I am assured, most honorable missive lies before me. Indignation which was my first impulse has given way to regret; and it is so much charity that prompts me to write this and silence you kindly. I can say nothing, for the very threshold over

which I speak is dangerous; and you must not ask me to listen to you. The countenancing of this proposition would be doing you no injustice, and be painful to me. To be sure I have seen you day by day, and half wondered half divined the meaning of those strange glances; but I know you not, and we shall never meet if we have no mutual friend. For your kind words and the portrait (though it is a great mystery to my mother and me), I thank you. The portrait I cannot accept. My best wishes are with you; I know you will be charitable and spare me the pain of answering another of these strange epistles. I have been generous; be even so to me and forget me.

PRUDENCE RIEL

—Twenty-ninth st.

“Now, gentlemen, nothing in this epistle startled me as the very last stroke of her pen,—namely, the number and the street; for it is none other than the very house in which you are now, as you well know. What think you of this?”

“Well, Doc, it rather looks as if someone had mistaken you for a woman.”

“Nonsense. There is a tender mystery

behind all this which I shall fathom, however, and render duly to my collaborators. But hold ! listen to this ; herein ends the self-confessional which cannot be approached without something of reverence, be assured, and which in a psychological way, is a thing of intenser purport. Now, gentlemen, listen to this :—

‘What have I done ? Where shall I begin — where shall I end ? It is all, all over. She loves me not ; she hates me. Good God ! she is nothing more than a mortal, with flesh, and bones, and a heart that will not understand. She is not then the angel of my fancy—the ethereal loveliness which grew up as a devout ministration akin to my own spirit....foreordained of God....She is a mere mortal, and I have perpetrated that one criminal blunder that makes a....Lost, lost, lost : all, all is lost. Oh, my head....burning, burning. She scorns the portrait, and I have struck it down—that damnable falsehood which led me to the brink of eternity where now I stand gazing, prayerful....And my heart is shattered with it. It is all over : I am disillusioned. Solitude has made a madman of me. I

hate living. I am dead and buried. This is not I staring in the flesh.... It must be but my baser portion here : the soul hath ascended to its God. This torture cannot be the pangs of a living soul ; this is not(*blurred*). No, no, no ; I must not, shall not....and yet I dare !' .

And so, gentlemen, follows the tragedy."

IV.

The old library in the van Tassel mansion on the Hudson. The young sculptor at ease upon a divan, alternately through the high windows gazing upon the blazing sunset, and scanning the delicate pages of a volume of Madrigals. Miss Marguerete close enough at his side to overhear the chatty ripples of the pretty verse in which both take silent delight till interrupted by the coming of the young doctor.

In which Dr. van Tassel consents to dip into verse for the little public's benefit, and expatiate upon the modern poetical idea.

"Hello! Maynard. Jove! that's ease. Talk of Al-naschar and his popped couch in the vales of— what was it?"

"Give it up, Doctor; my orientalism's rusty since coming up here. I do n't theorize any more upon the rationale of content—"

"No; since knowing the genuine article in practice. Well, that's philosophy. I do n't believe in analyzing my affections; I am supremely satisfied just to love, do n't you see."

"Yes; I agree with you."

"I see you do, Maynard. What a fool a man would make of himself to get down on his knees before his lady-love, beginning, 'My sweet, my darling Susan! (now what process of mental aberration causes me, a man of infinite wisdom and theory) I love (to get down on my knees before this psychical desideratum of a suppositive incompleteness of nature?) you, and I want (what primitive inheritance is manifest in this palpitation of the gizzard which the lowest order of mammals) you to marry (and the highest endowment of the absolute man-god, whose spiritual reading of the occultisms of nature?) me, and I beseech (why do I tremble? — why are my lips so parched?) you to name without delay (if civilization proceeds in the ascendant for twenty milliards of years, what will be supreme consummation of this?) the happy day, 'and damned be he who first cries hold!'"

"Oh, Bob — Bob! Spare us — spare us!"

"Peggy! you are impertinent. You must never interrupt a philosopher — even if you are his favorite sister. That's too much."

"Well, it was for the too supremely muchness of that theorizing of yours that I cried 'hold.' I think you must have lunched again with those rusty sticks that infest Mercer street and talk metaphysics,"

"Nonsense ; I have been at a Prohibition convention for points on mixing a cocktail. You see, a doctor must know all about narcotics, anæsthetics, emetics and cocktailitics, if he would be accounted a good physician. Why, only yesterday, I gave a patient the first three, and when the temperature rose up and blew the monkey-wrench off the safety-valve of my thermometer, I gave him some of the forth. Yesterday he was a gouty millionaire ; to-day he is a hale and hearty sandwich-man for adown-town shirt-house. Cocktailitics are expensive, but effective —"

"Oh, brother — brother ! What is the matter with you. Plague take your cocktailitics and nonsense ! We have been in a much more refined atmosphere this afternoon ; have n't we, Mr. Maynard —"

"I dare say, Peggy ; by Jove Maynard looks five years younger since yesterday morning."

"I certainly feel so, Doctor, and I certainly owe all my convalescence to the genial good grace of your sister Peggy."

"I dare say once more. Peg, I did n't wink at you ; you need n't frown."

"I did n't frown, you silly fellow. Really you are a nuisance, breaking in upon our happy little Elyseum where we have been soaring hand in hand with the poets all day."

"Poetry, eh? Poetry indeed."

"You are cynical, Doctor. Do n't you ever read poetry?"

"I?—I read poetry? no, sir ; never. I write it ; I never read it. I am like Wordsworth ; I never read any poetry—excepting my own."

"Oh, I see."

"No, you do n't see either, begging your pardon, Maynard. I am a born poet, sir, born — one of the *nascitur non fit* individuals with a big bump over each ear, baggy trousers, long fingernails, and a delicate ear for music."

"'Delicate ear' is good, considering the ears."

"Peggy, you may write me down an ass, if you must, but spare me for my

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sister's sake....Yes, sir; I am a poet. Listen to this: hold! you need n't open the windows. There is n't going to be a fire. Maynard, sit down; I wrote this for you, sir, for you. I thought you needed it."

"Oh, well, go on, doctor. I am getting use to your pills, I must get use to your poetry, I suppose —"

"Yes, and you're getting use to my port wine in the cellar too, I notice. You might as well include that in your alliterative list of restoratives. But hold! here is my offering. Listen now: Peg! as you love me —"

"Go on, brother, go on."

DOCTOR CUPID.

"Dear Doctor Cupid, I have come
To tell my ills to you;
There's something wrong that needs perhaps
A pill or two.

There's such a ringing in my head,
Such visions in my sleep;
Bewildered thoughts that make me laugh
Then make me weep.

The gods that petted me of yore
Now set me in disgrace;
For look where e'er I may, I see
A maiden's face.

Here's Horace, and old Juvenal,
And Petrarch and Carlyle;
But 'tween those stately lines I read
A maiden's smile.

And here's a rose with petals red
Whereon the morn-dew drips;
But in its ruddy deeps I press
A maiden's lips.

Beethoven chants the symphony
That bids the gods rejoice;
But through those sweetened strains I hear
A maiden's voice.

The very stars outdo their wont
In yon unclouded skies;
But no: I gaze and only see
Two warm, brown eyes.

Now, Doctor Cupid, tell me true —
Why do you smile and yawn?
By Jove! there's part of my internal
Economics gone!"

"Your pulse, young man; let's see your tongue! —
'Tis serious — but, I'll try;
Here! take one dose: *Rx Vinculum*
Matrimonii!"

"Good — excellent, Doctor. But, I say, that's a libel, sir, if you insist upon dedicating it to me."

"Well, Maynard, I do n't know. I do n't like to offend you, you know, but I think the prescription would be more apt to cure than to kill you. At any rate,

you think it over carefully. In the meantime I will read you something of a little different strain. You know the Clyte that stands in the corner of my study — eh? Yes; well, this is a sort of ode — do n't you see, — listen!"

MY CLYTE.

Features like a Naiad free,
Wave-locks that pale brow above,
Ears that list' no wooer's plea,
Lips that never spake of love.

Cheeks of Cupid-thoughts unflushed,
Eyes down-glancing pensively,
Neck up-poised and bosom hushed
In love's wordless poverty.

She returns no fond caress,
None her virgin soul beguiles;
Nature taught her loveliness,
Art lives in her very smiles.

King, nor saint, nor flatterer —
None of these shall know her graces:
If fond lovers knelt to her,
She might laugh back in their faces.

But perchance a lover there is
Who could such a goddess trust;
I refer him back to Paris
Where I bought this marble bust.

"Good, Doctor — excellent!"

"Thank you, sir. I get all my poetry
from Squibbs — you know Squibbs —"

"No, I confess I do not."

"What! do n't know Squibbs? Why, I thought the whole world knew Squibbs. He would resent it as an insult if you presumed to intimate that the universe was not two-thirds Squibbsism and one third Theism."

"A delightful egotist, I must say."

"Yes, I assure you, Maynard. He thinks the world and all of himself, like everybody else, for that matter; only he has not that practical faculty of dissembling it. Well, as I was about to remark, Squibbs is a poet —"

"A poet, brother, — are you sure?"

"Indeed, Peggy, and there on the lower shelf yonder are fourteen half-calf books of poetry uncut, unthumbed and immaculate to prove it, be well assured. But Squibbs had an idea that poetry was not paying enough, and with huge ambitions of doing the literary lion, he found a tenth muse which affords him more solid repose than the whole quirking, demanding nine put together."

"And what was that, Doctor? a wife?"

"No, sir; 'Poets should never marry,' is the title of one of his heart-appealing poems. You would doubtless entertain a

like opinion if you ever read it — entertain it in pure sympathy for the woman.

MR. SQUIBB'S IMPROMPTU.

"I would be rich," my Fool-soul said,

"Yet would a poet be —"

My Wise-soul smiled a cynic's smile —

"S' blood! thou 'rt mad," said he.

"I would be wise," my Fool-soul said,

"In occult lore and wit —"

"Ah, well; you are so very brave,

I'll try to manage it."

"You 'ld be a poet, yet as rich

As Cæsus, as it were;

Well, then, my boy, I tell you how:

You be a publisher!"

"Squibbs deserves success, Doctor, after that bit of turn-coat logic."

"Indeed he does. But come; let us to the garden. I want to talk with you upon some down-town matters. Do you want to see the papers?"

"No, thank you, Doctor. I have quite my fill of ideas."

"Oh, I see, Maynard. You want to obliterate the past; you want to forget your late city life — to become simply a phantom — an unbodied fiction for a while. Well and good; I advise it strongly. You have an excellent opportunity here, be assured."

"I realize all that, Doctor."

"To be sure. Here's my old library, pretty well thumbed, it's true, but for all that the more congenial. I hate an unthumbed book. Whenever I do the Miss Nancy with my books, I buy a spotless, immaculate copy for my upper shelves, and then go into some unholy down-town book-cellar and buy another copy of the same work begrimed and redolent of snuff and knee-breeches and old sherry, with faded marginal notes. . . . But here : I must get into your studio. Do you mind my giving you a little help in that direction while you are up here?"

"Not at all, my good friend ; indeed, it would be ever so kind of you. Here, here are my keys, Doctor ; do what you will. I shall be content to leave all my secrets in your hands."

"You are very kind, God bless you, sir ; I will do all I can for you. In the meantime I want you to take a daily horseback jaunt on my grey, with a happy accompaniment in Marguerete."

"Oh, I am scarcely strong enough for horseback jaunts as yet, I think."

You will be so in a day or two. Peggy

will go with you, and show you the best paths through the hills yonder. And she is an excellent equestrienne, to speak in circus bombast, — excellent. She has her brown filly, — a present from a Kentuckian, and the grey at your disposal is a happy complement."

"You are so good, Doctor. Pray, do you treat all your patients in this festive manner?"

"Only those whom the gods love, and whom I help to die young."

"Kill 'em with kindness, I suppose."

"Yes, when I find my physic ineffectual to accomplish the same. But patients require such different treatment. When Nature in the physical man lacks anything, she generally makes the rest of the organism help her howl her wants. For instance: I have patients that require a prescription which on account of its length I am obliged to scribble out on a roll of wall-paper, and the druggist mixes the concoction in a vat, sir. Then another requires the simplest thing in the world: wind, for instance. I had a patient who was simply dying for lack of wind in his psychos. I took him up to Champlain

and set him up on a peak with his mouth open. He's there yet for aught I know. That man only wanted wind—cheapest drug I know of; but he took to the new diet as I have seen the Veddahs in Ceylon hug a piece of rock-salt for the want of which their bodies are literally burning to ashes—hug it, and suck it, and caress it like idiots, simply because nature asked for salt, and would not be put off with stove-polish or honey as the grocer insists when he is out of the called-for article."

"That's a fair bit of practical treatment, Doctor."

"And successful always. Now you, for another instance, you don't need either wind or rock salt. You need a diurnal dose of *complex societas* as a natural anecdote to *complex solitudo*, just as the lover, as related in my ballad, who came to me and said there was something the matter with his head. I knew his head was all right; it was his heart that craved something. I gave him a dose of *vinculum matrimonii*."

"Ah, yes; exactly, Doctor, exactly."

"Well, well; this will never do. Come;

put on your hat. Let's have a walk in the garden before dinner...."

"Ah, that's a stylish turn-out, Doctor; do you know the occupants?"

"Know them?—well, I am rather sure I do. The young lady is from Fordham, I believe; I've forgotten her name: think it's Barrington. She's a type-writer, or something of that sort. Clever girl, they say, though scarcely my natural complement. She's now engaged to Jonas, down the hill yonder. That reminds me of a curious happening a month or two ago. I called on Jobbins, the most unobtrusive and easily won of men, whom I have invited up here to meet you. Well, you see, Jobbins had accepted Miss Barrington's invitation to accompany her to the Union Square Theatre, but lest he forget all about it, which he did, she called for him at the appointed hour instead of waiting for him. Well, I found Jobbins dressing; the young lady was waiting for him down stairs. He was in a high fever of excitement. He had invited a young lady in the house to accompany him to the Madison Square. He dared not go down, yet

dared not do otherwise lest the two young ladies get clawing each other in a manner undignified but telling, over this poor piece of humanity. Jobbins threw his arms around my neck and beseeched me. I felt in my waist-coat pocket—yes, in changing my waist-coat I had put the roll of bills safely there. I consented, met Miss Barrington who pouted a trifle, but went with me. ‘Yes; the tickets were gave me by the leadin’ man,’ she said rather over loudly to my discomfort as we seated ourselves in the theatre; ‘you see, I done some type-writin’ for him.’ I looked about me: thank heaven! all strangers. She filled me with platitudes and slang for two hours, and then we came out, and, by way of reciprocation, I asked, ‘Will you not go up to Clark’s with me for a little supper? I really feel guilty accepting your courtesies with no reciprocations whatever.’ ‘Oh, no, thanks. But would you mind walkin’ up to the Grand Central depot with me? I live in Fordham, you know.’ ‘Oh, certainly. We’ll have a carriage. Hi, John!’ ‘Oh, no, no; please do n’t. It’s moonlight and I will enjoy the walk so much.’ Cabby

dismissed. We passed Delmonico's ; no, not even the naming of an ice, or a rare-bit, tempted her. 'She did n't want nothin'.' We reached the depot, and sat waiting for the train. Finally the gates opened. 'Would you mind purchasing my ticket to Fordham for me ?' she asked timidly. 'Certainly,' said I. 'Delighted to find something I can do for you.' So I leaped into the line that leads by the ticket door, plunging my hands into my pockets — horrors ! the roll of bills was only a roll of medical notes. I had changed my waist-coat, and— The sweat rolled down my cheeks. The line pressed me on. I looked at her, then at the ticket-man. The window looked like a guillotine ; I shuddered as I gazed at it helplessly. I ransacked my pockets with the abandon of a lunatic, gathering the pennies from each pocket. The result : just sixteen cents ! What if we had taken the carriage ? — had stopped at Delmonico's for a six dollar feast ? — or had.... Spare me ! Where under heavens is Fordham ? I never heard of such a place. Was it near Albany, or Kamschatka ? On, on, I was hustled toward the window.

My collar melted. Finally I leaned up next to the window, and looked at the ticket man. I could n't speak. He must have thought me an idiot. 'Here—how much for a ticket to—to—Ford—ham? I gasped. 'Fourteen cents!' 'Saved!' I cried, and bore the ticket to her as if it were my respite from an early grave. Rather an experience, was n't it?"

V.

A cafe on Twenty-fifth street. Dunstan, the painter, seated opposite Dr. van Tassel, discussing ethics, art, and the rationale of curing Brie, at the same time prying ever a little deeper into this portrait about which the Doctor weaves a fabric of seemingly enmazing romance.

Wherein Mr. Dunstan finally consents to the completing of an important link in this chain of evidence.

"Well, you see, Dunstan, it's a matter of such vital importance in helping to circle out the full circumference of this stratagem; besides, it's a masterpiece

— verily, a masterpiece, I affirm.”

“That may all be; but the next proposition is make the Hanging Committee concomitant on the point. It must be a matter of unanimity; not a mere caprice of some wilful one, or in another, the desire to put a friend in clover, that ensures a hanging in the choice lines of sight. I can take your word for the merit of the portrait — but pray, before we go any further, why not give me a bit of the historical data that so shrouds this piece of modelling? There is a history at the heart of it, I am led to believe. May I not apprehend it?”

“With a little patience. I am assured that could the important little documentary appendages be attached to the object of this interest, the Academy would in nowise be apt to bare the cold shoulder to it. I gave you last night in the billiard-room at Buncomb’s reception, a little history of my interesting patient, the young sculptor, whom I have safely housed in the home of my heart, up the Hudson, with my good mother and sisters to companion and achieve for him something of the repose so ignominiously lost

in this conflict of passions. Well, I received his keys and a power of attorney, in virtue, to ransack his haunts to the depth of my zeal. Surrounded by this festive aureola of good-cheer, he feels quite in the mood to vouchsafe me the loan of his soul, if thereby it would add to the measure of my days. Of the portrait I had something of a preconception formed from a line of his distracted journals written some days before his stupid blunder over the laudanum bottle, and I came down from the country this morning with, I may say, the express purpose of bringing from its hiding place the first of the portraits hidden in the old Florentine chest, and, with your kindly furthering, Dunstan, of setting it up as as one of the household goddesses in the Academy. The old lock creaked and groaned with an ominous admonition, be assured, ere it gave up its treasure finally ; but at last I reached down into the bowels of a new Olympus, and embracing the exquisite thing, brought it to light, and set it up where the beholding world may contemplate it with pride. Be assured, Maynard, whatever he may do by

the fierce light of his impulses in real life, however he may try to flatter the formless ideal into a calm, benignant reality, in his art — in the work essentially of the head with perhaps a touch of the heart underlying the deeper tones, in his art, I say, that man is a full, round, perfect circumference — a man through and through. And there it stands awaiting your perquisitions—the image of a soft, maidenly feature, almost that of a child about the lower face, embodying a strength and heroism that belongs essentially to the higher types of womanhood. It is quite unfinished, and for all that, the more interesting. He quite forgot all model and ideal—all conventionalities which belong to the promiscuous Venuses and Medias one sees passing grace along the walls of nearly all cosmopolitan exhibits; indeed, he quite excelled his accustomed rules and structural guide-bars to which the man merging into the master still clings. The portrait is unique, refined, exquisitely simple, and with all the associations with which, it almost seems to me, no one beholding could long remain uninformed, a thing patheti-

cally beautiful, inspired of a lofty spirituality. But never mind all this. Suffice it, you shall pass judgment upon it, and if it does not place Maynard in the front ranks, be assured there is reason transcending my little presumption."

"Well, Doc, I will do all I can for old friendship's sake ; and if the portrait is as worthy as you would have me believe, the world shall not remain blind to its merits if my influence avails. But come ; what has kept you so sullenly to yourself of late, Doc ? Where have you been these many days ? I mistrust a mettle more attractive elsewhere than the Scalpel and the Red-horse inn."

"Yes ; to be candid, this Maynard affair has quite engrossed my thoughts of late, to the exclusion of things quite as commanding by virtue of a duty. I have divided my time between my official encumbrances which have grown so consistent a penance of late, and the companionship of my new-found genius and friend, the sculptor. He has grown immeasurably interesting as has developed the approachableness which these amenities on all sides could but

awaken, and is very fond of the old place."

"Naturally enough. I do not wonder at that, Doctor. How does he spend his time."

"Much of it in the library under the vigils of the old parchment heroes of my father's liking, and when this genial seclusion is at an end, he wanders off in the quite as delightful *surveillance* of my two sisters, exploring the woods beyond the old mill, for scraps of natural sentiment and introspective Platonism."

"That must be a delightful sort of Platonism, Doctor."

"Ah, you are facetious, I perceive. Well, I'm generous to your faults. Yes, Maynard is in that tenderly receptive state when the abstract idea is the truest reality; when the observing faculties are trained into discipline at the expense of of the analytic; when impressions are the only realities, sensation the only life. Doubtless the real contact with nature will serve to re-establish the equanimity lost in so much striving for possession. The evenings generally find us with our feet upon the fender before the blazing logs which the goddess of social converse

seems to demand should be as well-fed these growing spring days as in the dead o' winter, even though the back windows are kept open as a remedial measure against the heat of so much crackling festivity. The sight of a blazing log makes even the uncontemplative thoughtful, parting the lips of the most sealed oracle, closing the mouth of the most hardened cynic."

"I quite agree with you there."

"Maynard now computes the area of life by an entirely new measurement — a rule of action and affection rather than a yard-stick. And there I sound the young enthusiast, prying opinions from that natively rugged but somewhat over-refined mind. Then day after day, I plunge back here to the city, a narcotic dose of nosology or paleontology, a bad luncheon, an hour at the Scalpel, and home again by dinner time, eager to resume the thread of our classic rambles."

"Not an eventless existence — yours, after all, Doc. By the by; you said you had a possible clew to the identity of the portrait. Do you mind enlightening me on the subject?"

"Well, Dunstan, I will confess to you that I quite lost sight of the little episode which happened me last evening under my own roof as it were, here in the city. You see, I was asked to dine and regale the Scalpel club with a new *bon mot* or two in honor of the advent in our fields of research of a celebrity among the brain specialists. Instead of going home after my day's browsing in the realms of bacteria and minstrel gags to see how many of the latter I could legitimately plagiarize, I went out for a cup of tea and a cracker, about sundown, and after something of half an hour of desultory trifling, started back. I certainly must have been more than usually absent-minded—for, plodding up the stairway and passing down the hall to my door, I was only brought to my senses by the difficulty with which my key turned in the lock. But ere I grew even suspicious, the lock finally yielded; so I passed in, closed the door behind me, and was about to hang my beaver on the chair by the book-case, as was my untidy wont, when I discovered by successive pawings in that direction that there was no chair

there. I looked up and about me in the gloom, amazed somewhat ; then shrank at my stupidity. I had mistaken the flat. I had only passed up one flight of stairs instead of two. Standing quite confused in the dusk, scarcely knowing whether it be the surer policy to turn and run, or the more gallant to announce myself pleasantly to anyone that might be in the apartment, I glanced to the front, and there to my added interest and confusion, before the window, outlined against the deadened twilight sat a young girl—a slender, graceful figure in contour, with head bowed as if absorbed in thought, gazing through the parted curtains as if expecting a sign of recognition from some one opposite. She evidently mistook me for someone familiar, for though she once turned her eyes in my direction she seemed satisfied that it was he whom she thought it. I stood convictedly dumb and bewildered in the quandary. The situation was so thoroughly unique that had the balance of power once bordered over toward the fool, I could have played it admirably. As it was, the balance in the favor of the better gallantry, I stood

still contemplating. If I spoke, however apologetical the tones of my beseeching, the unique affair would result in a serious fright to the young lady before me. Yet for similiar reasons I dared not do otherwise. Happy circumstance! To my relief inexpressible, an elderly lady with a wise, generously open face came into the room, bearing a small taper which she thrust into the chandelier, and instantly the room was ablaze with light. I stood bowed, hat in hand, back to the door, smiling like a Satyr, and otherwise pouring as much sunshine upon the sour pantomime as possible, and for that moment we all stared at one another with such helpless grimaces of interrogation upon our faces as would shock a rational physiognomist like yourself, Mr. Dunstan. 'My kind lady,' I broke forth demurring for the infusion of a little courage into the helpless moment, 'I beg a thousand pardons. How could I be so stupid? I have stumbled into the wrong apartment—' 'Oh, never mind, Doctor, never mind,' was her happy interruption, which amenity, coupled with this sign of recognition, touched my heart with a thrill of

joy. 'I'm sorry for your sake,' she continued, 'does your key fit our door?' 'I confess it does, or at least it did then,' I replied with quite unfinished gallantry. And thus the ice broken, navigation from that perilous point was manifestly smoothed by the good lady's self possession. It is needless to say that this inadvertence that I believed my ruin, was really the occasion of my acquaintance with two of the most charming women in the world. I began to see fortune even in my blunders."

"Yes, Doc, some men do. That's a delightful pass of providence which never has laid in my direction, I fear. But go on: do n't let me snap the thread of your narration. Did you leave then?"

"What! with my mission half assumed and not fulfilled even in the eye of victory? Indeed, I did not leave. 'Bye the bye,' said the elderly lady, 'were you in your office last night. No? — well, my son Jack was quite feverish during the evening, and has suffered much during the winter with subacute rheumatism. I thought it well to call you, inasmuch as I understood that we had a doctor so near

at hand.' 'You were very kind,' said I. 'I always try to retain those who happen to me. You sent for me then?' 'Yes; my daughter Prudence rapped twice at your door, and—' But I really heard no more of her remark, for I turned my eyes toward the window and my curious glance was met. 'Heavens!' I murmured, 'it is *she*!'

I stood gazing, recalling and gazing again till her expression changed from one of passive concern in attendant matters, to a condition of positive ill-ease; and then regaining my gravity, I said, 'Oh, I beg pardon. Why, you looked at just that moment so much—so very much like—eh, yes, a friend of mine, don't you see, that I scarcely believed it was not she. But to the point. I was absent last night; that is, I was home, or what I call 'home,' where my good mother lives, up the Hudson. I have been up there daily of late; quite an unusual task for me. But I have a patient,—a young sculptor who was taken very ill some days since, and as he had neither parents nor friends at hand to care for him, I took him up to our old country home.' 'How good of

you, Doctor,' said the elderly lady. 'And a very estimable young fellow he proves, —this young sculptor,' I continued. 'A most exquisitely sensitive mind.... thank you : I'll take the smaller chair. Keep the rocker, please....yes, he was very ill—very. I did not expect him to recover so quickly, but Mother is so good a nurse and my sisters such cheerful company that his convalescence became a matter of days instead of weeks.' 'Indeed? Tell us more about him, Doctor.' 'Well, you see, he was a very hard student. He lived in the apartment house directly opposite—' and here some one drew a painfully sudden sigh—'and his life was very solitary. I do believe that his old housekeeper was the only face he had seen for months, except those perhaps visible occasionally from his windows.' 'How dreary,' said the young girl, recovering. 'And is he poor?' asked the elderly lady, interestedly. 'Any man is poor that is so miserable,' said I. 'As far as the worldly commodity we call 'wealth' is concerned, he ought to be happy enough, for he enjoys completest immunity from the commercialities which per-

haps might have been his saving ; but as for that rarer wealth which we call happiness, indeed, I never knew such a pauper.' 'How strange!' both echoed simultaneously. 'Ah, yes, men without money are ever seeking what can be bought with money ; and those who have money are ever seeking what cannot be bought — seeking the priceless — what is beyond them. As for him, he is striving for high and exalted excellence in his art, — a thing only to be purchased at the price of solitude and great labor, even as of the days of greater deeds. This solitude that made the young man miserable, also made him great. The curse was not solitude, but the abuse of it. He began to eat the sacred fire when he should have been content to work on silently by its holy light, do n't you see ? He was a sort of young Stylites, pinned up on a high eminence, going through a penance rather to the mystification that the edification of the world.' 'What a good woman your mother must be to care for him so interestedly,' said Mrs. Riel. 'Your observation is most kind,' said I, 'and you shall have an opportunity of confirming your

gentle word some day, I trust. . . . Oh, but how the time flies. I must dine with the Scalpel Club at seven thirty, and meet some of my old compeers. I have been in Germany studying for some years, and it is proclaimed of me that I have forgotten the use of my mother-tongue. I am going to vindicate myself to-night.' 'I trust that you will be successful,' said the elderly lady, rising as I retreated. 'And if Jack has any return symptom of feverishness, I shall send for you.' I thanked her graciously, and, with the willingness that 'Jack,' should blow his brains out, if only I might be called to blow them back again, I departed. And now, I may say, my severest occupation is the encouraging of that morbid, perhaps unkindest of hopes, that the unknown factor — Jack, in the apartment below, might wet his feet and call me in to grind up a little peppermint for his rheumatics, that I may go as a lover's *intermezzo*, administering as one who desires rather to be administered unto. You divine the mystery, Dunsian."

"It is very like mystery in appearances, but lacking the essential quality that

mystifies. It seems deliciously transparent, Doc, that your 'Portrait of a Lady' for the Academy is none other than your interesting rhapsodist, whom you —"

"Well, well; come, Dunstan, to the Square. I will give you the second lesson of this tender bit of scripture later. Come; let us get out of these fumes of cigarettes and absinth, ere we grow too ethereal. Besides, I want to show you a discovery of mine in dimetric crystallization. It's nothing if not unique. The whole Scalpel is in legislature over it. Come; it will give you an opportunity to examine my new Ross microscope; a marvel in a way. You should esteem the privilege; I assure you it is not often that I unbend over science as I shall forthwith. Count yourself fortunate."

"As you will, Doc, as you will. We painters are the most docile fellows in the hands of you dissecting, desecrating, analytical monsters. But be it as you will; my forefathers were brave men. I preserve their name, why not their shibboleth?"

VI.

The homelike little drawing-room of the Riel apartment below that of Dr. van Tassel. Mrs. Riel, Prudence, and the Doctor holding a quizzical clinic over the grandfather's clock, which had stood in the corner dumb for some days, but which now lies flat on its back on the centre-table.

The Doctor relaxes, and with the advent of an idea, puts it to the rack mercilessly.

"Yes, Doctor, I am ever so glad Prudence met you on the stair this morning just as you were coming up. I hesitated a long time before I consented to send for a tinker to renovate the old heirloom, for tinkers are most unfeeling brutes, the best of them, I'm told, with a grand old relic like this. But I do miss the familiar tic-tac at night. Its silence really kept me awake "

"Not at all strange, Mrs. Riel; not at all. I think a silent ticker an abomination. Yes; this old mummified Trojan that has stood in the corner so long, is a valuable piece of ancient mystery. I doubt much if the average tinker could

solve the secret of its internal economics. But I have a couple of these old Hollanders in my library up the Hudson, and I happen to be fairly conversant with the subject at hand. Yes ; I was delighted when Miss Riel confessed to me on the stair this morning that the old treasure must go out for a rejuvenation ; delighted, not because it needed it, but because it was my privilege to administer thereunto. Just as I am delighted to be called in to deliver a prognosis upon a new and interesting case, though reasonably and courteously sorry that the poor fellow needs my services. Now, ladies, I think I have hit upon the delinquent little imp that has caused this stern retribution of good old father Time. I have dissected for about half an hour among the wooden cogs and clumsy cranks, pried apart these ancient ribs, and at last hit upon the root of this disordered constitution. See!—it's a—"

"A what?"

"A hair — a single, bright, long, golden tress. I wonder to whom it belongs?—ah, Miss Prudence, I beg of you, dissemble those brushes ; for I affirm most de-

voutly that I have known a golden hair to disorder many a constitution ere this, and I heartily wish they all were as quick of remedy. Now, Miss Prudence, the hammer, please, while I strike his mahogany thorax a wizard tap or two, stand the venerable time-dispenser on his heels again, and put him once more abreast with the times. Ah, a little further; thank you."

"The thanks are more in order if tendered in the other direction, Doctor, and a profusion of them too. I am delighted to see the dear old face light up again with something of its former expressiveness; for really, it looked like a corpse to me with shut eyes and sallow cheeks when the tick was gone."

"Oh Prudence; how can you say that?"

"Why, mamma, that's the truth. I told you so the other night."

"I know you did; and you drove me into the other room by the thoughtless freak. I hate anything uncanny and spectral. But after all, what are the greatest of the dead but old clocks with the tick gone?"

"True enough, Mrs. Riel. Thank

you; I will take the little chair by the window. I am something of a moth, you see: I like the light. I think too that we enjoy a peculiarly pleasant prospect from these back windows. The huge checker-board below, in which everyone seems to try his best to keep a little garden, is quite cheering after a glance into the ill-paved, rag-picking, and noisy streets. A back window always has a fascination for me. I do n't mean that I am at all back-handed in my social policy, but I just merely enjoy the back view of men and things—the counter-view of society at large. It's only the darkey that takes the pains to shine his heels, the comparative addage assures us, and I notice there are professorships in physiognomy, palmistry, and what-not; but I would found a new one—dietrology: the science of the rear view of things. I delight to get behind people and study the figure; the curve of the shoulder; the poise of the neck; the wave of the hair; and particularly the walk, and all that, in fact, proclaims the person. I hope to have a peep into the back windows of heaven before I am called upon

to enter at the front door."

"A strange fancy, Doctor."

"Yes, and one who would lightly misconstrue the thought, might attribute most Machiavelian offenses to these philosophers of posterior analytics. I realize all that ; but a more open nature than mine God never granted a mortal. This is not a whim : this is a delightful piece of logic, if you will but see it so. You must take a rear view even of my genial dorsalogy, as it were. If I were to meet a foe, I would like first to dog his steps closely a mile or two, in order that I might determine my tactics with exactness. Then I would run around and face him. Now, for instance, I spoke of my young friend and patient, the sculptor Maynard....are you uncomfortable in that chair, Miss Riel ?— I beg you to exchange with me."

"Oh, no, Doctor ; thank you. I am quite comfortable. What were you saying of the young sculptor ?"

"I am glad you encourage me ; I had recently sworn not to mention his name unless encouraged to, for I noticed that you were a trifle bored the other day

with my recital of his experiences."

"Oh, not at all, Doctor. Did we appear so?"

"I may have been at fault in so construing appearances. However, to carry out my theory in your eyes, and my resolves properly dispensed, I will tell you what I have done with a little masterly piece of —"

"First tell us how he is, Doctor. Is he improving?"

"In a very satisfying way, thank you."

"And will he return to the city soon?"

"Ah, I am rather convinced that he will remain where he is for some time yet. It would be a great task to tear him away from his present content. He has our great library to divert him, the woods to wander about in, my horses and dogs, flowers and fruits in abundance, clear air, and above all, the kindest and merriest of faces about him. Why should he wish to return?"

"Truly enough; why should he?"

"I cannot even persuade him to read the dailies. He seems to hate the memory of his city life here, and all that prompts a retrospection, seems to afflict

him. If he *had* read the papers of the last few days, he might have become apprised of the glory in which his name is written at the present. He is proclaimed a master."

"Indeed?"

"In deed and in fact. I say this with the most heartfelt affirmation. He has a piece of modelling at the National Academy—a portrait of a young lady, which has startled these radical unbelievers in nineteenth century genius, and placed him in the foremost rank."

"Impossible!"

"Yes, the thing is really a marvel. Just the warm, classic, expressive clay, don't you know. It's the only thing he ever exhibited, and proclaims the advent of a master, if those who know things of a high order can be relied upon to criticise."

"And, Doctor, do you mean to tell me that he is ignorant of his success?—that you have not yet assured him of his triumph?"

"I confess that I have not. I thought it decidedly the better—"

"How cruel!"

"Ah, Miss Riel; you mistake my policy, though I am inclined to be remorseful after such a sweet little reproof as that. But to tell the truth as I ought, I stole that portrait from his Florentine chest."

"Stole it?"

"Yes, I stole it, and took it to the Academy without his permission save the embrace and reckless one implied when he gave me the keys to his trunks and chests, bidding me do what I chose with what I found. I have done so. I took the fair clay goddess in my own arms to to the Academy, feeling certain that there was fame and mastership proclaimed in every line and lineament. As far as his knowing nothing of it is concerned, my silence in the matter was entirely remedial, I may say — an expedient which has proved beyond my desires successful. I prefer that another should apprise him of his triumph."

"How strange!"

"Do you think so, Miss Prudence? Would you ladies not like to see it?"

"It would give us great pleasure, Doctor."

"Thank you, Mrs. Riel, I will arrange

the affair with my sister, Marguerite. Peggy's a dear girl—my favorite, something of an artist too, and the sweetest little lady in the world. I will bring her down to-morrow, and she shall accompany us."

"That will be very kind, and for us most enjoyable. Thank you, Doctor. But tell me ; did you say the masterpiece was a portrait ?"

"Yes ; the portrait of a young girl, Mrs. Riel ; a young lady about nineteen or twenty, I should say, fresh features, kind, deep, expressive eyes, very thoughtful mouth, and an exquisite poise of the head. Altogether such a model as a master would choose out of ten thousand."

"But I understood you to say the other day that he was very solitary. That he had not seen any but the face of the old housekeeper for years. How could he choose his model from ten thousand if he were such a hermit ?"

"Ah, Mrs. Riel, you are fast forcing me into the corner, and down upon my knees for mercy at that. In truth, it's all a mystery. The portrait is too much of the earth earthy to be the mere fiction of an idealist — the mere dream of a revel-

ler in profound classic mysticisms. . But I say ; it's nearly five o'clock. I promised to be home at six promptly to-night, for my pet Peggy is going to call in the country folk for a sort of *musical*. She wants me to arrange the flowers, and probably I shall serve my time in the capacity of a ticket-seller for the sweet grace of charity. So now ; can I depend on it ? At two-thirty to-morrow afternoon, I will call and take you both to the Academy. Is that a settled promise ?”

“You are very kind, Doctor. It will please us greatly.”

“And now I will say ‘good evening,’ and trust that the old ghost in the corner will take up his mortal semblance again to you, Miss Prudence, and not shut his eyes, nor permit his complexion to sallow, his silence to frighten, nor otherwise keep you awake by his impertinences.”

“You are very kind, Doctor, very . . .”

VII.

The Doctor writes a letter to Dunstan at Washington in fulfilment of a promise, giving him the adventures of the day.

*Wherein matters
take a felicitous
turn, and prove the
pilot worthy of his
hire.*

Dear Dunstan : I could scarcely contain myself upon repairing to the Café where you promised to meet me at six, and instead of being honored with the wholesome good-cheer which all in your presence is blest, I found a nasty scrap of paper regaling me with doubtless the sincerest of regrets, — an edict as from a tyrant in most velvet gloves, commanding me to eat my dinner alone and in silence, and after I had drubbed the *menu* from A to Z, to give you a chronicle of events as they transpired in minute detail. Now do n't you think that a culpable presumption on your part, Dunstan ? Not content with robbing me of your company at dinner, but bidding me put the suppositive conversation to paper, and so des-

patch it to Washington for your edification? Now I would like nothing better than to give you a downright cut for your impertinence; and though at this genial moment I am the recipient by nature of a most forgiving, and I may say, approachable mood, and feel that even to disburden my heart of a part of its triumph is a joy unspeakable, I may yet cast this whole chronicle into the fire to spite you. So, Dunstan, be assured that if this ever reaches your eye, you are the luckiest of men; if it does not reach you—if it be waylaid by a vindictive impulse ere it passes from my possession, I beg of you.... but I will not commit my beseechings to paper lest it compel me to despatch them, and so overrule my own decree.

Well now; that's as confessing a prologue as ever dropped from the lips of a lover about to impart a bit of knowledge. I shall preceed forthwith to the abler task, and forget your wrongs and weaknesses. But mind you, Dunstan, another time you accept my entreatment to dine, and I find a brown-paper notelet rashly setting forth your absent whereabouts, commanding me to commit my would-

have-been *bon mots* to paper, you will get a deeper cut than was the awful glance of scorn inflicted upon me yesterday by four married, squabbling daughters of a rich old sinner uptown, who, though I administered to him in my professional capacity, utterly refused to die, compelling the four mouth-watering females to tie the little red ribbon around the old man's last will and testament in a hard knot again, and put it on the shelf till the next dose of colic. But here: I am rambling most unpardonably.

The mood which at the present hour compels a genial flow of visions from my cerebrum—of which you poor, out o' the world painters know nothing—is one far removed from any profanation of this kind. To tell the truth, Dunstan, I have had one of the most excitingly interesting studies in what I may lucidly term 'the affections discovering themselves,' that ever man enjoyed. I told you yesterday that I had made an engagement with my sweet friend Miss Riel and her good mother, to escort them to the Academy where I proposed to confront them with 'Maynard's Portrait of a Lady,' which

you were so good as to give a more than happy recommend to the world. After the experience of the day previous, I confess that I had not the heart to go up the Hudson and come face to face with the young sculptor, lest I betray unbecomingly a few luscious secrets which are ever better in hiding. I could scarcely have withheld the truth of his triumph, nor could have resisted the promise of exquisite satisfaction in pouring into the half inverted cup of his prosperities the secret of his promise of fame and honor. But there is time for that when he is betterable to stand it. I purposely missed the train, and hastened down to the Scalpel Club to drown my visions of romance in radical discussions on the cephalic ganglia of invertebrates—for all of which, thank God, you poor rhapsodizing daubers care nothing—the most persistent opiate I know. We, the Scalpels, had moreover, a subject which was not without a certain vital interest,—the cerebellum of a Fourth Ward alderman who died of water on the brain: a most exasperating puzzler, for the honorable departed was never known to be the slight-

est addicted to indulgencies in water either inside or out. The subject so defied our combined enthusiasm and persistent theorizing that what purported to be a really classical clinic turned into an ugly Irish wake, which demanded of course that each should see that the other kept bravely at his post till day-break. So, this morning, Dunstan, I tried to do a little work, after picking up and arranging the *debris*—the result of my prowlings about the room like Cœlebs in search of a match, but I discovered no particular formula for the inoculation of punsters, nor dissolved any particular surgical nebula in the lagging hours before luncheon ; so we will call the first half of this blessed day of events a complete nondescript—the merest myth with which we have nothing to do in the handling of such absolute fact as the remainder of the day brought forth. I stopped at the florist's on my way to Bullion's for my luncheon, ordered a superb wreath to be sent to the Academy marked for 'Maynard's Portrait of a lady,' and at two, I called on the Riels. The good ladies were soon in readiness for the happy task,—the to me

exquisitely pertinent study in crimsons. Miss Prudence, the young lady in question, — ah, what would poor Maynard have said and done had he beheld her then — came into the room like a vision of some happy idealist stuck into tangible beauty. She was most becomingly attired in — well, as I am a stupid fellow in describing the delicate anatomies of female apparel, and as I only remarked her sweet, maidenly face, I shall say smiles, Dunstan, and you 'll know what I mean. Thus half reproaching myself that I was advancing the cause of another where I should be most circumspectly guarded lest I fall into the same delightful enchantment, all three, — Mrs. Riel the young girl's happy place of concealment from my somewhat quizzical glances, — went to the Academy. Through the north, the east and south rooms I was careful to guide my obedient charges, expanding to my uncertain classicism upon the most noticeable successes with all the ardor and exact science of a connoisseur in pigments instead of pills, many times bidding the ladies be seated where they could enjoy my comments to an intermina-

ble length, each knowing that our minds were elsewhere. Each seemed to delay the climax for the sweet sake of the other — a most sovereign charity, as punctilious as the five polite Frenchmen on the way to the guillotine who insisted formally upon the conventional *aprez vous Monsieur, apres vous*; but the delay was already working an uncomfortable solicitude in my own heart, so I hastened them on to the west-room.

‘But now, ladies,’ said I with a levity that was rather water-logged, as it were, ‘I am going to show you the treasure of the Academy for this and many a year. It is here in the west room with the etchings and other reliefs from these blazing walls. Come, let me lead the way through this crowd, if it be your wish.’ Neither replied. A simple, quiet acquiescence was my reward, and the young girl took her mother’s arm perhaps for support, perhaps to be shielded from my questioning and, unconsciously on my part, irritating glances. We entered the west-room. By the look which burdened the otherwise bright and interesting face of Miss Prudence, one would have thought this pal-

ladium a death-chamber ; but, as many a woman grows interesting with the evidences of a care and a responsibility upon her, who might otherwise pass our notice quite unremarked, so Miss Prudence, blessed little creature, though never for a moment unworthy of admiration, now seemed doubly interesting with her mood at ebb tide, the heart brought up close to the surface so transparent and manifest. A group of admirers about Maynard's masterpiece pointed its place at the end of the room. Silently I urged my charges forward. There, at the top of the pedestal, at the base of the bust, hung the magnificent wreath. The effect was most happy. The crowd slowly waved aside for the newcomers, and we stepped forward. Good Mrs. Riel being a trifle nearsighted, was obliged to draw very close to the figure ; but the young girl remained behind : one glimpse had been enough for her. Indeed, standing beside her and gathering every little evidence of her wonder and silent musing, she half frightened me with her sudden pallor as she slyly drew her veil over her eyes, partially I judged to conceal her secret

from any who might note the sure resemblance, and partially to hide a big tear of threatening discomfort at the whole pantomimic effect, thus capping the pinnacle of my convictions. However, a moment later, she grew composedly brave, and advancing, stared at the beautiful image long and earnestly as if in some wonderland dream. The catalogue fell from her nerveless hand. I recovered it for her without speaking; but a moment later, realizing the possible peril of this embarrassment, I expostulated in an off-hand manner upon the fervent subject, expressed with somewhat of zeal, an opinion of the tribute which some admirer had shown in just appreciation of the rise of a master, and, endeavoring to read the hieroglyphics on the card, and failing quite necessarily, we all stood back and breathed as freely as possible under the somewhat oppressive spell of the moment. Again and again the mother adjusted her glasses with not every evidence of her nervousness waved down, secretly comparing with a simplicity of pride and applause the beautiful tribute of the unknown lover to her daughter's outshining

loveliness. The while, bewildered more with each questioning scrutiny of the bystanders, the young girl clung closer to her mother's side, her dear little heart probably revolutionizing her whole faith in the reality of things, till I at last reached out, plucked the loveliest rose from the wreath and held it out to her. This was simply unmitigated cruelty; the tears that had been crushed back, now glistened behind the half concealing half disclosing veil again, and those lips quivered with either a secret joy or a secret bewilderment, I can but wonder which. 'You will share his honors,' said I. 'It will make him very happy.' I then handed a spray of lilies of the valley to Mrs. Riel, and principally for the benefit of the lookers-on, who began to think me a most promising vandal, I continued confidently, 'I must take this wreath up to Maynard, to-night. He will be overjoyed.' Then turning to greet Mr Herpard, the trustee, who had been summoned to the rescue when informed that some desecrator was helping himself to the master's laurels, I begged him to despatch the flowers to my room before six o'clock,

that I might take them up to the young sculptor myself while they were fresh and radiant. Reluctantly then we parted with our interesting enlightener — this crown of ascendant forces whence affairs now proceeded merrily down hill — and for the first time the waters parted before me as by the stroke of a divine hand which should yet lead me on to triumph.

At the door of their homelike little apartment — Dunstan, if it weary you — but no; I don't propose to tender any apologies even to you — I was bidden in for a cup of chocolate. Now, chocolate, Dunstan, be liberally assured, always brings a vision from the unknown whence all visions emanate and command even us blundering old Galens as you daubbing young Titians — yes, a vision which I will forthwith interlard in the divine comedy of the passing chronicle for your interest, and as a generous tribute to your patience to date: The time — no matter; the place, Venice. God bless Venice, and keep her streets from ever growing wider. Wherefore? — listen. I sat in the window of my beloved Palazzo Ticorini, smoking the most chivalrous Virgin-

ia. She sat on her balcony, sipping chocolate from a thin, delicate Murano cup. From my window and from her balcony we could easily have shaken hands across the interesting street—but, Dunstan, we never did. She was the embodiment of that languid, estranged, intuitively wise type of Venetian, refined in every look and gesture, perhaps so in intellect as well; but I spoke but one language then, and the mutual interest which daily grew more manifestly interesting was kept up only by these lovers' interchanges across the narrow street, which unrestricted mutualities were perhaps the more spicy since they 'went a-begging' for words. I praised her delicious chocolate; praised it by drinking it—the surest kind of praise; she praised my attentions; praised them by inviting more of them—the surest kind of entreatment. Thus, dear Dunstan, between us, by virtue of her chocolate and my attentions, there sprung up a spontaneous, ill-definable ligament, which, even if definable, would be spoiled in the defining, just as a fool would crush a diamond to search out the fire. One day, perhaps more than usually eager by

force of some added faculties of pantomimic expression, I passed my cup back to the sweet Signorina a third time. With charming grace she filled the cup with hot chocolate, but in passing it back, it slipped from her graceful fingers and fell to the street—horrors! fell upon a hatless bald head. The lightnings ascended and floods of choice Italian came, and I was thankful that my ignorance saved me from knowing the depth of my cursing. But the sweet Signorina had disappeared, only to return instantly with a face pallid with apprehension. My look was one of undoubted questioning which she answered by assuring me, '*Quell' uomo e il mio marito, Signore!*' whereupon I pulled down my Italian dictionary, and, dear Dunstan, if you are half as interested in the affair as I was, you may do the same, and so learn why I left Venice that night, and why chocolate always compels that wild phantom of my fallen gallantries and subsequent flight, to slip before me and the real world, bearing a pang of regret perhaps, yet not without a touch of good humor in the rebound.

But let me proceed with the immediate.

We sat in the little library, whither I had been invited with such dainty cordiality, good Mrs. Riel opposite me, the object of my fiercely growing admiration on my left, sipping chocolate from the most graceful and fragile of cups. I think I exhausted my questionable stock of small talk ere I ventured upon the vital subject of young Maynard and his portrait. At the very sound of his name, both ladies dropped their eyes with an interesting reserve, rattling the tiny gold spoons nervously in their tinted cups without a word. 'Ah, my good friends,' said I, rather warmer than was my wont, I fear, 'I am apprehensive lest what I thought such a treat for you has only proven a disappointment. Why are you so silent upon the subject of the model, Mrs. Riel? Is it not a very beautiful portrait? — a very striking and absorbing piece of art?' 'Very,' she replied without a perceptible discouragement; and then flushing a trifle deeper as if a blush could correct her speech, she continued, 'yes; as a work of art, it is certainly a master-stroke.' 'Then you were not disappointed?' 'Oh, no; not at all, Doctor,

How could we be otherwise than pleased with it, and by all means with your delightful courtesies of the afternoon. It has given us great pleasure be assured —' 'But,' I interrupted with mysterious looks and intonations, as if plunging out of an estrangement, 'I do n't — I can't understand. It's all such a mystery to me, — such a profound, earnest, engrossing mystery, this portrait and the sculptor. I do n't fathom the first series of complications, say naught of what follows.' 'They both looked as if they understood perfectly and preferred me to desist from further speculations thereupon. A silence followed, unbroken save by a tinkling of the cups which seemed to dissemble much, and provide a certain compensatory reward for such an expenditure of nerve force. 'Now,' said I, quite unguardedly at last, 'I have an interesting secret to make plain to you — a bit of a puzzling romance which is most imperfect in outline in my mind, — an incomplete circle, as it were, which perhaps you can complete for me. Would you mind my telling you?' 'Oh, why, certainly not,' replied the mother, again

speaking for both, without lifting her eyes. But I remarked secretly an unmistakable lack of womanly curiosity, I may say, which apathetic regard was meant to command me with the stricture, 'Keep your pretty secrets to yourself.' 'Yes,' I resumed darkly, 'a great mystery enshrouds these unconventional facts. I dare not even approach the young sculptor upon the vital matter, so sensitive he appears to be.' 'Is it possible?' 'Yes; the portrait, as you might readily imagine, cannot be the mere fiction of his mind. It bears more of the evidences of a refined, discerning genius for natural observation, than the ethereality of a mere dreamer's ideal. It has too much character and virility — it has too much strength real and tangible, and of the earth earthly with all its divine embodiment of the spiritual idea, not to be inspired of a living, breathing thing. With all its surpassing beauty, its very passport into one's heart is truth; truth that is not to be gainsaid, actuality that is certain and refined. Yet, truth in what? — true to what? — to whom? There's the mystery. It is taken from life; yet

with all the precluding circumstances of Maynard's isolation, how can it be possible? I should delight to see the original; she must be even more lovely than the image.' The poor girl opposite me dropped her spoon with a discordant rattle, and choked at this last observation, while I fell to sipping my chocolate with energy and abstraction. Only the good mother, God bless her, maintained anything of a respectful repose. 'Now, you see, it's this way:' said I, gathering forces to the front again, 'his old housekeeper swore that no man had passed the threshold of Maynard's studio for months, and no woman, other than herself, had ever done so. Think of that! Now where did he get this model? I am sure I could find out all about it if I chose, for he kept most fluent journals—you know these solitary men generally do—and as he left everything in my charge, giving me the keys—' 'But, oh Doctor; you would not do so unbecoming a thing as to pry into—' 'What—me, madam? Do you think that of me?—never; not for the world, I assure you, not for the world. But you see it's so spitefully perplexing.

Maynard, too, is so utterly miserable about something or someone. There is a chasm to be bridged, as it were, ere he will ever be himself again. Now, look you! Do n't you think I would make a palpably good bridge?—do n't you think I would make a good binding link between the man and the object of his love? Why, I would give my right arm to see the poor, dear fellow's heart at rest once more; to vouchsafe him what he so devoutly craves, and so bless him with something tangible to love, to live for, to aspire to make himself worthy of, and all that, do n't you see?'

They both said they saw, yet dared scarcely lift their eyes.

'And he would make her *so* happy.... But bah! what twaddle am I talking.' I exclaimed, drooping beneath my own weight of wonders. 'Verily, I am a worse dreamer than he.... Ha! I have it now?' 'Have what!' 'The idea!....no, I have n't; I thought I had, but I have n't. Who do you suppose sent those flowers to the Academy?' 'I wonder,' said the young girl, recovering for the first time, and pressing the scarlet rose she had

caressed through all the foregoing, to her burning cheek. 'Oh, some mad woman or other who has seen once or twice,' said I, 'and now that he is famous, seeks to captivate him.' The rose dropt from her hand and fell unheeded to the floor. 'Beg pardon,' said I, 'your rose — has fallen.' But her face was defiant. I recovered the rose, placed it on her lap, since she disdained to touch it.

A few moments later she sauntered nonchalantly to the window, and with a glance as to assure herself that she was not watched, she flung the rose out of her jealous sight.

But, dear old Dunstan, why do I weary you with this narrative? Let me just say in conclusion that all things worked admirably to my purpose, the play growing even more interesting as it passed the climax of the middle act; and, with the principle personage under my own mother's roof, I left the good women, silently assured that all remaining for me was simply to let these matters fall by their own impetus into their proper parallels, and naught but harmony could be the result of so much earnest and strug-

gling discord. See now, dear Dunstan, you have in clean, clear black and white this portrait of an angel, and the attendant facts which would otherwise have been delivered over the fumes of black coffee and Chartreuse. And so, God bless you, and a warm good night.

Ever yours,

ROBERT VAN TASSEL.

VIII.

An epistle penned by Dunstan while on a fishing excursion on the Potomac.

*In which Dunstan
tells what he thinks
without hesitancy.*

Dear Doc : I have your letter in my hands. It was the last thing handed me as we left Washington — five of us revellers — for a fishing excursion on the Potomac ; and here I am in mid-waters, the four genial revel-

lers fast asleep, hanging to their unbated lines, champagne corks lying about in tell-tale confusion, and an occasional snort from the pilot to let me know my whereabouts. Now, this is the ideal spot to read a chronicle of that erotic order just despatched me, and I forgive your noticeable short-comings. But I insist upon one thing. You call this a portrait in plain black and white: now, I differ with you. As it appears to me, it is a very decided *Portrait in crimsons*. It's painted crimson from tip to tail, and by your own blushes, my boy, yours, all unconcealed. Now, see here; just stop where you are, and do n't make me believe that you are furthering the cause of that man Maynard. Unconsciously or not, you are conducting all the *affaires de cour* yourself, and for yourself only. Just pause a moment before you hand her over to another; pause and question if it be consistent with your present exultant mood. I do n't want to see this portrait in crimsons turn into a portrait in black and blue, as it certainly will if you are not a little more selfishly circumspect. There now; take that. You need n't thank me

for this advice, for it would never have left the secret archives of my heart had not a generous cocktail opened its doors. You may thank the cocktail. Now I say . . . hello ! Matheson's got a bite. Wait a minute. I'll have to splice him to the boom, or he'll get hauled overboard . . ."

IX.

The old van Tassel homestead overlooking the Hudson. An evening garden-party in honor of Miss Marguerite's birthday in happy progress, bright Japanese lanterns hanging here and there about the winding paths, and the company dispersed somewhat, many couples with the remnants of ices and sweet-meats in their hands, seeking a genial seclusion. The Doctor and his sister seated under the elms, isolated beyond the possibility of being overheard.

Wherein the Doctor confides a secret or two, and begs the clever patronage of one well versed in the comparative tact of women.

"And that is just the reason I followed you here with such docility, Bob, because I was sure that you had something on your mind which deserved an ear. I saw you glance at me two or three times in that last lanciers before the supper, and I knew by your beseeching look that you had something important to disclose. Come now ; I have been awfully good to leave the jolly company to come away out here in the dark — boo-oo-oo ! I'm chilly.... Well, well ; what's it all about, brother,

— what 's the mystery, anyway ?”

“Mystery !— I do n't think it can bear up so cumbersome a name as that. To tell the truth, Peggy, my sweet little sister, I have got a task for you. No ; you need n't look at my waist-coat, nor feel around for your work-box. My apparel is faultlessly whole. It's a task of far more importance than the sewing on of buttons, or mending the torn button-holes in my cuffs which is the general burden that one of my 'tasks' carries with it. I am very serious, to-night — very serious.”

“I perceive it, Bob, and a little frightened about something. Is not that so ?”

“Well, I feel particularly susceptible of almost any sudden transition ; but I cannot say that it is exactly fright that I experience. To tell the truth, I want you to get up early to-morrow morning, and accompany me to the city. I want to materialize your good judgment and taste —”

“Shopping ?”

“Oh, dear no ; something so far removed from anything of this secular order that it is almost profanity to speak of it

in the same breath. Hush ! here comes Maynard, and mother on his arm. He wants to show her the developments in a new species of rose, does he ? Well, let him fill the delinquent gap with his classics ; we will walk on. By Jove, how Maynard has changed in the last week ! What a mystery that man was till he stood fairly upon his feet, and then how genially transparent he became."

"Mr. Maynard is just lovely. I do n't wonder everybody admires and seeks him. I—"

"But look here ; I have a secret for you, Peggy. Hold ! not so enthusiastic now about Maynard ; you will make me suspicious of the impressions he has made upon you. Come now ; I have a secret for you."

"A secret ?— Oh, tell me quickly, Bob. I like your secrets ; they are so strange, and sort o'—well unique, do n't you know."

"Well, this is one of the old stamp then. A more unique secret never dropt from a poet's lips. In truth, Peggy, — draw a little closer ; you will take cold if you do n't — to tell the truth, Peggy ;

— here ; let us sit here I want your assistance in a very important love-affair."

"What !— yours ?"

"No ; not mine. By Jove ! I wish it were ; but I will relieve you instantly."

"Whose then ?"

"Maynard's !"

"A love-affair — of Maynard's ?"

"Why, Peggy, you frighten me. Why did you start so ?"

"Did I start ? Excuse me, brother. I did not know I — well, well ; go on."

"See here, Peggy ; tell me the truth. You do n't think too much of Maynard, do you ?"

"Me ? — I do n't think too much of anybody ; not even you. You are impatient."

"Well, I do n't mean to be. Now do n't get vexed. Come back here ; I want to talk to you. Only when I mention Maynard again, I beg of you, do n't leap out of your seat. Now, see here ; Maynard is in great distress of mind, though he conceals it admirably."

"I thought that from the first, Bob —"

"You are discerning : I will reward you. I have met her."

"You have met her?—whom?"

"Why, the lady in question of course, and she is the most interesting, generous little soul that ever lived. She is just that one I would believe a sculptor capable of choosing from a whole ten thousand whose spiritual beauties are so happily evident upon every feature. She is just such a one as you, my Peggy, would choose as a friend and would honor so."

"You talk like a lover, Bob."

"Do I?—well, she is not for me—not for me. I wish she were—but; what an immense mountain is that word of three scrawny letters! Now, listen to me; I want you to call upon her with me to-morrow, and invite her mother and herself up here the day following."

"Are n't you afraid of a scene?"

"Now, mind you, Peggy, don't chill me with any of your cautionary suspicions. I will vouch for the young sculptor's composure."

"But, Bob, what does all this mean? I do not understand."

"Ah, I forgot to tell you about the portrait at the Academy. Well, now; what a fool was I to begin at the end of

the play and run backwards. Well, listen now, and you shall hear the whole affair — as much as you deserve — from beginning to end. In the first place, Maynard modelled an exquisite portrait....mind you, do n't you tell now!"

X.

After the garden party. Maynard and his host, the Doctor, tarrying over a decanter of sherry in the west wing of the old library, after all the household are asleep, and silence after so much romping festivity has become a profounder silence.

In which the Doctor tries to pry out a secret or two, and with what success. "Sit there, Maynard. It's more comfortable, you know; and besides, how strange it is that some chairs will fit almost any frame, while others are utter failures in that direction, not from mere unavailing skill in workmanship, but rather from a chance slip or irregularity in outline. Now, I'm very particular about my chair. It fits

me, although it makes every one else who attempts to gather comfort from it, weary and discomforted. I think the time will come, Maynard, when we will go to the chair-makers and let him construct our chair after the angular contour of the body. Why not? To be sure a certain kind of trousers would fit anybody, if long enough and big enough waisted, provided there was a reef-string in each leg, and a belt at the hip capable of embracing all desirable circumferences; but who would catalogue that Turkish, balloon-legged anomaly with the fashions of the hour? Now, I am for every man his fit in chairs as in hats and shirts and false teeth; why not?"

"Not such an absurdity as the first blush would make it appear, Doctor. Of course you mean for the man of letters and study — the sedentary scholar who spends in a chair that share of his life which he spends out of bed."

"Certainly; I mean the man whose life is shortened by a vile sort of pillory to work in, instead of a comfortable, perfectly-fitting set of cushions and arms which make his task a delight. Now look

at that magnificent, antique, embossed leather chair in *Louis-quatorze* style. Why, man, there is n't a soul in Christendom that seats himself in that inviting looking chair but in ten minutes will begin squirming about as if he had on the poison shirt of the Greek general."

"But I notice that Monsieur de— sat there to-night."

"Yes; Monsieur de— makes for it invariably, and sits their like a hero for three hours just because he is a worshipper of that meretricious age, whose history, thank God, the world is too sensible ever to repeat. Yes; Monsieur de— dives for that chair, Herr von — takes to the rocker where he sways back and forth, discoursing on pretzel-heraldry and military tactics, to the annoyance of the stately Monsieur de—; and Herr von—, with the quiet, reserved, theological Mr. Mac—, takes to the divan yonder."

By the way, Doctor, what a conglomerate bagful of curios you have up here, anyway. Is it not surprising? Here are the Dutch, Prussian, Scotch and French old time schools of genuflection and courtesy, all Americanized in a

way, yet each retaining that irradicable personality not to be mistaken nor confounded with another. Don't you know, the other night they all were here, each with his hobby and peculiarity uppermost. There sat Mr. von—the Hollander, achieving a condition of eloquence over Rembrandt and Paul Potter's bull, from whom he claimed a lineal descent—from Potter, of course—while Mr. Mac discoursed upon landlordism in Ireland, of which no Scotchman knows anything, and orthodox precisionism, of which no Scotchman knows nothing. Monsieur de—broke in once or twice with an ethical mosaic of Zolaism, *paté de foie gras*, and the impressionist school of art. Now was not that a delicious compound to medicine a man who has been a hermit for the years that I have?"

"Rather, I confess, Maynard. You see, these good old gentlemen are of the rare old fellowship we read about. They came over here early, worked hard, went home rich, with the intention of staying; but when they found the old homestead swept away, and all but one or two old friends gone, they sickened, came back,

and thanked God for America. It is the old story retold. Yes, they all knew my good mother when she was a young girl, powdered her hair and advocated by usage—the surest kind of advocacy—the reformatory costumes of good old Mrs. Bloomer. Those days are gone, and they all hobble up here to recall the good old days, and let their characteristics protrude just far enough to bristle and catch a little lightning from each other's varying opinions, all in genial humor, of course. It's strange how the child speaks the character of the race and family, and then it disappears in him, to resume it's peculiar inborn quality when the man is in his decline."

"Yes; that is a strange truth, yet an undoubted one. 'Heaven lies about us in our infancy,' Wordsworth says, and 'fades into the light of common day,' when the child merges into the man. Now I hold, that that very heaven re-assumes its glory in the old man. Take old Mr. Mac —. Did you ever hear such a Scotch brogue on a middle aged man's lips? — never, I dare say. But on the lips of Scotch children you have heard it,

that and nothing else. I declare, the little ones and the old men in the Highlands talk a language utterly unintelligible to me at times ; while the parents of the children — the sons and daughters of the old men — talk like any one else. It only proves that contact with men and things eradicates personality — moulds a whole race after one pattern. Only the children and the old are individual — are unartificial and typical to the very pith of action and word."

"You are right, Maynard....I say, Billy, can't you make us a rarebit — eh? That's a good fellow —"

"It's a shame, Doctor, to make him go down stairs and concoct a rarebit at this time in the morning ; and then what a prescription for a man in my condition of mind and body —"

"Yes, I suppose I am doing a most unprofessional thing to allow you even to remain out of bed. As for Billy, he just delights in that sort of thing at any and all hours, if it pleases me. He thinks the world of anyone who wears that essential facial protuberance known as the van Tassel beak ; you must get one, Maynard,

and be 'in ze swim,' as Monsieur de—puts it."

"By the way; what a happy old Abderite that rollicking Frenchman is!"

"Yes; they tell a good story about him, and I doubt not the truth of the gist of it. There is a little stone Presbyterian church down the hill about a mile, to which, one day under the hilarious pressure of a glass of mother's port, he so far forgot himself as to subscribe a thousand dollars. It nearly drove him to suicide to pay it; but pay it he did, so he thought he must get his money's worth by joining the church. They instantly made him a deacon. Three months after, his wife died; on the fourth month he married the hired girl. The church sat in judgment upon this unseemly crime, and he was arraigned before the assembled deacons and elders. There was much serious debating which ended in a promise of forgiveness to the delinquent French deacon, *that he would never do it again*. As he lives in the left wing of the mansion and she in the right wing, and as they never come together without someone losing some teeth, I guess the deacon

wishes he had n't been so hasty about committing the crime or seeking absolution therefrom. . . . Ah, thank you, Billy. Here's a dish fit for kings. Billy, Maynard gave me a scolding for sending you down to construct one of your delightful little surprises at this time o'morning, but I could n't resist."

"I declare, Doctor, you quite put me in good humor to-night with all your good graces and heartiness. I thought the Frenchman's posing and grimaces irresistible; but you outdo even him in physicing away my natural ailments with that best of all antidotes to spleen and self-derogation."

"Oh, I do, eh? Well now; why should you not ever be in the most prodigal mood of good humor, you disheartening young sceptic of optimism — why not? You have an abundance of those possibilities to happiness which the less fortunate I am sure would more gratefully realize a bounty. You are not so far sunken in these suppliant moods of yours that some light of a lustrous spirit may not penetrate the disguises of your insipient pessimisms. Why, man, here

is wealth, wit, your genial share of good sense, and enough of the divinity of art to give your life a circumference that most men cannot describe with their secular yard-sticks. Why should you be anything but a merry-souled cup-bearer to the gods, filled with good cheer and health though every pass of circumstance? God knows, a possibility to happiness and above all to make others happy, should not be wantonly mistaken nor 'stinted in its sizings,' so to speak."

"Perhaps not ; and, Doc, since you are so good about it, I *will* try to be happy,—to be cheerful, and bright, and interesting ; but, ah, how shall I bring so deep-sea a thought to the surface that it be not misinterpreted?—I really never have *enjoyed* since I was a child. Once—long, long ago, it seems, now that so much disillusioning wisdom has interposed to attenuate the much-inflated truth,—since coming to man's estate, knowing man's possibilities to happiness and his probabilities to unhappiness, I saw a vision—a mere, increate, bodiless but most enchanting fiction—the realizing possession of which it seemed would make me a

complete man. That vision, like a child's water-bubble which he dreams to be a world — round, rich and iridescent with the most entrancing of hues, burst—God! But let that pass, Doctor, let that all pass."

"No ; go on. I'm interested, Maynard, go on."

"Illusion — illusion : nothing but illusion and wonder. There is a secret at the bottom of my ways and words, Doctor, which you will know some day —"

"Ah, Maynard, every man's love is an open secret. Too bad indeed is it that philosophers and wits have never yet invented a bolt strong enough to lock up the treasury of a man's love-affairs, to keep them from breaking the bonds, and roaming all over the face, deeds and words of the man himself where all the world may read. And you, Maynard, you of all others are the most prodigal of that which you flatter yourself is held in such inviolable secrecy. A stupid observer indeed would that man be who held you up to the sun and yet could not see through you. Even as the clever cards whereon are printed the name and office

of the man, which upon being held to the light, disclose a whole internal revolution, so may the philosopher consider your foibles and virtues whenever you happen to step between the lamps of revelation and the reader's eyes. But never mind that now. Come ; it's time doctors and patients alike were in their beds. Let us not tarry over this intoxicating mixture of rarebit, sherry and *amour* till we make fools of the gods who 'of our pleasant vices,' 't is said, 'make instruments to scourge us.' Let us be circumspect even at the expense of conviviality after twelve o'clock at night."

"You are very right, Doctor ; and a hearty 'good night' to you."

"And, Maynard, mind you : drop your Tennyson to-night, and take up with Boileau. He will put you in a less receptive mood, though the depth of descent which illustrates the actual distance of fall, be not attended with any very great peril. Be a philosopher before you are a poet, and you will discover the signal anomaly : that you need not soar to find heaven ; you can find it on the plain, material earth, Maynard, in the commonest

ways, in your own heart, my dear fellow, in your very heart.... Billy, light Mr. Maynard to his room...."

"Ah, Doctor, I can swallow your pills, but your philosophy sticks. I like you as a friend and a physician; but as a mystic you are a failure."

XI.

Being an epistle to Dunstan at Washington, containing some light, abstract information which would not be the least out of place in a treatise on social Hypnology.

The Doctor professes ignorance of his friend Dunstan's impertinence, and yet half confesses it's justice and truth. "Now see here, Dunstan, if what poor Lamb calls 'the all-sweeping besom of societarian reformation' should ever express a desire to achieve distinction where the deed would be a double duty well accomplished, I should despatch it on a crusade to Washington, and out of the sweepings of that national

Babylon, I would rescue you, snatching you back into the eminence of esteem in my heart wherefrom you have so ignobly tumbled, and all, too, ere I realized your disgraceful absence. For, Dunstan, these Potomac excursions in cat-boats, with champagne-corks for life-preservers, sir, are compromising to a beggarly extreme. I admit that time was when a legendary and diplomatic jag was altogether within the compass of the code of social repute ; but, Dun, my dear fellow, that day has gone down into the gouty, vilifying past, and not one vestige remains whereon to hang the indulgence of a single repetition. Now I beg you to confine your heroic Bacchanalia to the four walls of your Rutherford park mansion, and confine the rash inductions produced by this strained condition of things, to matters material and immediate ; not spiritual and absent. In other words, the next time you have the sense to think of me, have the sense to content yourself with the think, and don't display your learning in the processes of ratiocination by making black causes yield white effects, nor concluding that because 'man is a

two-legged animal without feathers,' as Carlyle insists, that it is your duty to tar him and apply the necessary plumage that Nature has wisely withheld. In still other words, I have been insulted ; but, most lenient of judges toward all offenders, parochial and sectarian, I propose to extenuate you in my forgiving heart to the breadth of a hair, whereupon I charge you to seal an oath to heaven that you will shake the dust of the unholy city from your feet, and instantly return to me my entrusted reputation as a friend.

I am down here at the office again staring blankest impertinence into the face of my whilom oracles and parchment-bound *illuminati* that do n't illuminate a single idea in my blank, befuddled mind. They lie about me here in most frivolous confusion for so dignified a concourse of authorities, each with his white bosom bared to my eyes and an entreatment in every gesture. But it is quite impossible. I am devoutly, assiduously preoccupied. Now, you, not knowing, with an ungenerous eye to *ensemble* to the exclusion of the particular, would call all this the hallucination bred of the ecstasy

of love ; while I, knowing better than you, and with an attributable eye to the nicest causes, merely denominate this pleasurable experience to the manifest achievements of a disinterested charity. There is one divine condition of perspective which I doubt, Dunstan, if you ever attain : and that is, the power of standing one and apart from yourself, as it were, and considering all things of whatsoever an impassioned nature, with the calm judgment of a philosopher of types and *genera* who deals with composite fact with most heartless disregard for the whence and the whither—simply a questioner of the reasonable wherefores.

So, Dunstan, I beg you to dismiss all illusioning phantoms which may have clung about you since the hour you wrote me that insuperably libelous notelet, and consider me with the deliberation that becomes you more worthily. This morning I came down from our old home on the heights along the Hudson, my sister Peggy—you know, my favorite ; the one I am always dragging into my chronicles with such earnest purport in the deed—accompanying me, to meet Miss

Prudence Riel, in order that she and her mother may pay us a visit in a day or two, and the final link in this strategic chain of achievements of mine be accomplished. We met Miss Riel in the hallway, and my sister being presented, the two appealed to me to relinquish my chaperonage or ciceronage, just as you like, and go back to my rooms, leaving them to do the town together. This appeal, I may say, found most ready acquiescence on my part, and so is it, that, by a happy apposition of events, I am left to pursue my studies in perfect peace. But my labors this morning proved very desultory, rewarding me with the meagrest success. My vigorous self-promises, like all self-promises save those of the truly great and well-disciplined, were drawn out into such fine-line ductility, Dunstan, that they serve ill to sustain the heavy demands imposed upon them; and here I sit, scribbling to you in a manner, to quote Byron's libel on Wordsworth, 'that is my aversion.' But what am I to do? This young sculptor-patient is costing me more solitary consultations with the gods, robbing the patron saints

of Therapeutics of my late regard, and compelling more intricate compounding of restoratives than would resurrect a whole departed regiment. But worse than this, I am somehow losing my cultured taste for the classic -isms and -ologies that were once my profound delight from 'morn till eve, and eve to morn again,'—yes, losing it together with my appetite. I tell you, Dunstan, I am getting to look recklessly shabby, to assume the most disreputable shyness in the presence of the most friendly beholders, and then in the violent impulse which will not be divined nor questioned, I rush into the province of angels with the most abandoned temerity. Slowly, surely, with the expedients of commonplace all laid informally aside, I am a creature of sensation and extremest obstinacy. I have become figuratively ennobled—lifted into a sort of apotheosis of distinction which walks upon the thin, sparkling effervescence of this cup of rapture which I lift as a libation to the gods, and call the fuming vapor whereon I float the only reality—the only existence—the only fact, potentiality, power. I experience

the delight of Leonardo da Vinci when upon a mountain pinnacle he picked up a sea-shell; it set him thinking, and the result was a whole revolution in the processes of induction. But, alas, my processes no longer induce; they seduce. I am no longer a logician, but a magician. I am becoming so acclimatized to the tropic breath of eroticism that its sunny fragrance quite enchants me beyond the border line of professional policy. God! what is left of a doctor when he loses his professional policy?—not even a fee. I fight, I pray, I fume, I rant; but this sweet, unconquerable preoccupation will not be fought down, nor prayed down, smoked down, nor ranted down. Though I reprove it with dogmatic severity, it is ever that caressing sort of chastisement that says one thing and means quite another. I try to take this inexistent monster by the intangible throat and crush it; then I take it to my heart with a remorseful penance as if it were really an offshoot of something truly divine. I am serving two masters, equally powerful: a Titan and a god, — a fallen and a risen angel — and yet, Dunstan I don't know

them apart. I can't think in a straight line the length of my nose. Now look here; here on my right lies my beloved, thought-demanding Medico-chirurgical transactions, to whose worship in times past it has been my delight to burn nightly a pound of Chinese punk, now sorely pleading with me till they have simply become extortionate bores. On my left lies poor old Anceli on Tuberculosis, which, though abounding in some hundred kingdoms of the rich and strange, I now wish to the Olympian Zeus had never seen the light of day. Beyond me lies Lang on Mesmerism; book open at a passage which but ten days ago I called a masterstroke; to-day I call it a plague-spot. And here at my extreme left, Good's Nosology—with a multitude of my own notes on the margins which now look as if written by some fool or other who had long since sat down to the banquet of the *Immortales*,—once reading like a romance in the uncertain luminary of the midnight taper and my own enthusiasm, now simply laughing mockery into my face. Yes, they all are profane dogs, every one of them. I have anathemized

the whole sacrilegious pack with the fierceness of the Pope's bull against Halley's comet ; but like the said comet, they do n't notice the bull or my ranting obloquy in the least. This thing is eating to the heart of my very proud Spartan inveteracy with the sly insidiousness of the proverbial worm at the heart of the oak. But look here, Dunstan, before I close this notelet — by Jove ! when I come to count the pages I feel like striking out 'notelet' and substituting 'booklet' — before I close this headlong paper on the follies of espousing the cause of another with such rash assiduity even in the interests of psychological research, I want to inform you once more that your letter was an impertinence and an insinuation. If you think I am in love, you have need to study paralogism — the formal fallacy in which conclusions *do not* follow from the premises. If you think any such thing, Dun, you do n't know what you are talking about ; and being a suppressed *non ens*, you are incapable of expressing a rational opinion upon secular, to say naught of divine, subjects like unto this. If in your future epistles

you intimate anything derogatory or in the least — but, hello ! it's two-thirty. I promised to meet my sister down stairs at precisely this hour. I must not delay her one moment, you know. It's a pet gallantry of mine — this rigid punctilio of always keeping my engagements with my own sister as scrupulously as with any other man's sister. You must excuse me for a few moments ; I must not offend the ladies even to amuse you...."

XII.

A fragment of a conversation between the Doctor and his sister Marguerete, on their way home, after the call.

The Doctor jubilant, though for reasons scarcely known to himself.

"Sweet? — why, Peggy, the word itself is n't half sweet enough. I want a new vocabulary ; not a collocation of ranting, bubbling superlatives, Peg, but a new dictionary

of soft, sweet, gentle words, full of wholesome expression, and depth, and of the heart the very essence. That's what I want: a new love-lexicon which shall eradicate the old, and in the place of these decasyllabic extravagances with which the popular Anglo-American society novel regales a simple passion—these pompous, rhetorical swaddling clothes with which to wrap their baby-thoughts—by Jove! a new, soft, mellow, passionate speech that shall just say the thing and not over-say it. We have Law-lexicons, Materia-medica lexicons, Trade-lexicons, and lexicons of—God knows what not, Peggy, appearing almost monthly; and terms that therein once were, now have become obsolescent. If so with secular, unhallowed synonyms of trade, why not with the devout, leaping language of the lover? What a cruel shame is it that everything progresses but the ethics of love-making. Why, here's a fellow with a genuine affection—holy, transcendently apart from these sordid animalisms and commonplaces of everyday-life. He *loves*; that word to him is a scripture of heaven; yet is he obliged to hear men say that

they love beans; another that he loves horse-radish. He is precious fond of his Amelia, let us say, and dotes on her; but so are women fond of gewgaws, and dote on oysters and popular actors. By Jove! I say, Peg, it's a shame. Here is an unique, profound, godlike passion obliged to get along with 'darling' and 'dear,' when everybody calls his dog 'a darling,' and the measure of the price of pork is 'dear.' We progress in everything but the conventionalities of that most sacred to us. Even religions change, and new words are coined to meet the liberalizing tendency of such change; but love, ah! poor starveling goddess, she has to get along the best way she can with her big sister's cast-off petticoats."

"Well now, brother, this is very earnest philosophy from the lips of one who swears he does not know what love is."

"Only in the theory, my dear, only in abstract objectiveness, as we say in metaphysics, with which I will not now dilute this precious potion; I only deal with affairs of this tender kind as a spiritual anatomist, as it were — one of these fellows that pokes up the fire and watches

the pot boil, but do n't propose to get into the pot himself, do n't you see."

"No, I'm afraid I do n't see, Bob ; I am rather of the conviction that you are there already ; and I do n't blame you, for she is the sweetest, most captivating little soul that I —"

"I say, that was elegant tea, Mrs. Riel poured out for us, was n't it ? Cæsar ! it smelt luscious enough to have suffered company with a Chinese goddess."

"Well, but why do you change the subject, Bob ?"

"Because you are impudent, and I do n't feel in a particularly compromising mood, to tell the truth."

"Oh, you do n't,—eh ? Well, you have a happy way of concealing it, I must say."

"Do n't get vexed with me, Peggy dear ; only, do n't you see, I'm awful worried about a patient of mine —"

"Who ?—Maynard ? I guess he do n't need any more of your medicine. He can take care of himself now, I dare say."

"Yes, doubtless, Peggy, since he has dropped my regimen and taken up with yours."

"With mine?"

"You need n't look offended, Peg; but you might at least be circumspect in this matter, at least for your own sake. Of course you understand the existing state of affairs between Miss Riel and Maynard, which happy concourse of causes I propose to put into effect to-morrow. You have promised to help me, Peggy, and you do n't propose to abandon your tactics in the first stage of development, do you?"

"I will do as I said I would: do whatever you wish me to do, brother. I will even help you to make a fool of yourself if you insist."

"Well, I do n't insist."

"Bob, you let those affairs in which you have but an indirect interest, take their own course. If you want to crush a man's love, further it; if you want to preserve it, antagonize it."

"That's a woman's logic of which I know nothing, since it is founded on a fallacious theory of negatives utterly beyond my logic."

"Well, brother, when you begin to mix logic and love, look out for an explosion."

They will not amalgamate ; they will not coalesce. You wouldn't mix hydrogen and oxygen in one bag and touch a match to it ; you would keep them in separate cells and let them meet and ignite at the outlet."

"Yes, I suppose I would."

"Well, I'm not much of a philosopher, but my intuitives are worth a hundred of your analytics. I know more about love by experience than you will ever know if you stick to theory."

„Did Miss Prudence confess anything to you to-day, Peg?"

"No, but there was that left unsaid by the confessing that was readily guessed by the confessor. Prudence is a sweet, dear little woman ; I am overjoyed at the possibility of her being my friend. She is so simple, so generous and winning,— I don't know that I ever met a lovelier character. But here we are home again, Bob. Let us watch and see if we are met by any of the folks."

...."By Jove! Peg's a mystery."

XIII.

Early tea at the van Tassel homestead. Mrs. van Tassel, Aunt Sue and Maynard opposite the young Doctor and his two sisters.

The Doctor confesses a lack of continuity in the labors of the day.

"And what did you then?"

"Many things, mother, — more than I could rehearse in so short a time. I called upon Spricks, the animal painter, who is doing a prize pig for Scrumpum, the stock-fancier. It's anything but a labor of love, as you may imagine; but it's business, as old Scrumpum is going to give him a thousand for it, and I doubt not, throw in his daughter to boot."

"Mr. Spricks must be a highly compliant individual, I must say."

"Yes; I don't think the man cares much whether Scrumpum throws in his daughter or not; but seeing that she's the only child, and Scrumpum has filed a will leaving the bulk of his wampum to

her, he will doubtless tolerate her. You know Spricks has got along in years now—most forty, I dare say; and the natural mildew is pretty well brushed off his wings. He has laid aside his blouse and velvet cap *a la Lorraine*, and is content to paint pigs in his shirt-sleeves and take the pig-master's daughter in part payment."

"“Oh, what a falling off was there.”"

"Yes, Peg, a falling off the clouds into a pig-sty. But I called upon him, lifted him somewhat out of that proverbial slough of despond into which the best of painters seem oftenest to fall, echoed Correggio's '*Ed Io anche son pittore!*' which fell flat upon his unapplauding ears, and and then I sauntered down to Fifth street to attend an Anarchist mass-meeting."

"Anarchist?—why, my son—"

"You need not be alarmed, mother; I am a doctor and a philosopher. I want to study the human brain under all conditions of excitement, aberration, and apathy. I found the apathy in Spricks, I found the aberration at the mass-meeting."

"Fancy!"

"Then I went to the Montesque Club where they are constructing a primer of club ethics, which begins with classic gusto, —

A stands for arrears which Clubmen to-day esteem an honor their colleagues' to pay.

and so on down to Z with equally homiletic injunctions in each couplet. It is needless to say that it is the last resort of the Montesque Club to rally from the dregs of insolvency."

"Well, well; are you a member of the body!"

"Only honorary, thank my patron saint! — only honorary."

"Well, and then what!"

"Then I went to the *Cafe Philosophique*, as a vile little hole near Washington Square has been dubbed, and sat there with a number of huge-headed, shiny-trousered mage, who alternately watch the stars in the back numbers of the *Theatrical News* and fish the luminosities of Kant and Schopenhauer out of high mugs of Pilsiner. They do not work, they do not write, they do n't read; they only think. They have a vast reputation for learning, being so profoundly sparing of it. That's the way to be learned

now-a-days ; keep your mouth shut, and look daggers through a mass of shaggy hair like a spitz dog ; everybody will shiver with the illusion, and ask for your autograph."

"Well, and where was Marguerete all this time!"

"Peg?—oh, she was calling upon an acquaintance—ah!—of mine, don't you know?—a friend of mine."

"Yes, mamma, and she's the sweetest, dearest little lady that ever lived."

"Indeed, Marguerete? Well, where does she live?"

"Oh, in the vicinity of that horribly creepy study of brother's."

"Ah, yes, Peg ; creepy is good. I like my genial, sunshiny little Castle of Indolence called 'creepy.'"

"Well, but why do you call it creepy?"

"Oh, well, you know, mother, a doctor's office is always a mummy sort of a place ; and then—"

"Rummy?—eh, you do not mean *rummy*, darling, do you?"

"I said 'mummy,' Aunt Sue, not rummy. So full of pickled horrors, and skulls, and charts, and nonsense ; makes

me think of that nasty cellar in Madame Tussaud's wax show in London."

"But, Marguerete, dear, what of the young lady? Come back to first principles. How did you come to know her?—who presented you?"

"Why, brother, of course. He knows her very well."

"Oh, he does, does he? I must look after your ways, by son. Nice little secret to keep from your mother; now is n't it?"

"Do n't mind me, mother, I beg of you. Though she is truly lovely, and, I may say, just such a being as you might choose from ten thousand to be worthy of my good mother's son. I have no right nor inclination to interest myself too deeply. To tell the truth, she is—"

"Engaged?"

"Well, not exactly that, perhaps, but—"

"But near enough to make the conjecture a pardonable offense, perhaps, if not a certainty."

"Well, Marguerete, you seem to be excellently informed. Did she confide all this to you?"

"Only by insinuation, mother, only by

what she left unsaid. We went shopping, and then we went to the Academy of Design—and, oh, mamma, what do you think? I saw the sweetest piece of modelling there—just the warm, mellow clay, do n't you see? so exquisitely delicate—”

“By whom?”

“Hello, Maynard! you awake? I thought you had gone to sleep over this culinary freak of mother's. Delighted to find you conscious, my boy, delighted.”

“Thanks, Doc.... But, Miss Marguerete, please tell me all about that piece modelling. By whom was it?”

“I can't think now?”

“What a memory! Try hard and think it out for me.”

“....No use. There is no whipping my obstinate memory into activity; it simply hates names.”

“What a superlative reasoner you are—Marguerete; but tell me what it was—an ideal?”

“No; it was a portrait; the portrait of a young girl.”

“And you can't think of the sculptor's name?”

"I'm afraid not....But what of it, Mr. Maynard, anyway?"

"Oh, nothing; only I know most of the sculptors, at least by name and rank in their art."

"But this is by a hitherto unknown master."

"Impossible."

"Truly. It has set the art world in a ferment, I hear. They are going to make the sculptor an Academician on the strength of it. The papers are full of it."

"The papers! the papers! Where are they, doctor?"

"Um—ah?—oh, I believe I left them in my study downtown. You could n't be induced to look at a paper er this. Why are you now so suddenly?"

"A new planet, perhaps. I am interested naturally enough, Doctor, for I expect to be a luminary of that consistent service myself some day or other, unless all these headlong dreams of mine languish and whither away, though I scarcely think I am made of that sort of timber."

"But the mystery of it all. We have not heard the mystery of the affair yet."

"What mystery, Miss Marguerete? What gives the thought such tragic emphasis?"

"Mystery enough. The portrait is of the young lady I met to-day."

"Scarcely any mystery there. That's a most prosaic fact."

"Perhaps so to you, mother, but it was not so to her. It's plain to you, you think, but it's certainly a strange mystery to her."

"Why so?—Did she not sit for the portrait?"

"No."

"No?—well, how came the sculptor to model a portrait of her if she did not sit for it?"

"I can't imagine, nor can she. It was stolen."

"Stolen?"

"Yes; stolen."

"Then there is one thing possible to be robbed of without one's knowing, and which the victim would never miss."

"A wise paradox, mother, but a most perplexing fact in this case."

"But I don't understand, Miss Marguerete."

"Neither do I, Mr. Maynard; nor does she, nor anyone else conversant with the facts. The portrait is of herself, beyond the slightest shadow of a doubt. It has all her characteristics unexaggerated, all her refined and classic amenities of pose and feature perfectly reproduced. It is her portrait modelled by a man to whom she never spoke in her life, never even met. But mind you, the deed is there: go study the paradox to your content."

"Ho!—Maynard! Come, I want you to take a walk down the hill with me to the little old churchyard."

"But hold a moment. Miss Marguerete—eh....beg pardon, I want to learn all about—"

"I've told you all I know about it, Mr. Maynard."

"Oh, come on, Maynard, you rhapsodizing visionary. Look at your face in the glass! Why, it's scarlet. Come; you've got a fever; you want an anodyne—a cooler—an oblivionizer. You need phosphates. Come; let me give you a little talking to down the valley."

"Doctor, you're the only man in the world that ever ruled me. I follow your

edict like a poodle."

"Poodles do n't generally follow edicts, my boy; that's where you're inconsistent as usual. I tell you, Maynard, your whole life's an inconsistency. You want a balancer."

"A what?"

"A — well, never mind; wait till we get down the valley a way, and then I'll tell you...."

XIV.

St. Stephens churchyard in the valley overlooked by the van Tassel mansion. Maynard and the doctor arm in arm, wandering about in the contemplative twilight, content to bespeak the deepest mood by a betraying silence.

Wherein the Doctor at last wakes to the reality of his task, and grows more than usually warm in argument.

"Yes, I used to be acquainted with a man—or rather that attenuated portion of a physical being which was all God saw fit to represent the full-grown man—a crippled little philosopher who

spent the last few years of his uneventful life wandering about the solitary mounds and through the open wood beyond, dreaming, rhapsodizing, yes, and I think, writing a little, though his productions, the few snatches of them that I have enjoyed a reading, while bearing the unmistakable evidence of a thoughtful, nature-cultured mind, never attained for him anything more than an unfortunate local celebrity, founded first upon an element of compassion—a fatal foundation for any fame. I used to walk down here of the twilight in the long summer days when the very gods seemed propitious to all I said and did—during that ante-bellum period of youth when the most meagre successes are flattered into thunder and might—and always found that he had come before me, hobbling about the tombstones to escape me perhaps, his little hump-back the picture of a Venetian Gobbio, his keen eyes glancing over the deformity as if in fear of being tracked. He was uncommunicative to an extreme, even if approached suddenly and his avenue of escape closed. The only glimpse into the

poor little fellow's inner life was that gathered from those meagre snatches of unrhythmical and hobbling verse, and intensely mystic aphorisms, which scarcely lucid portraitures of the man at heart were left upon the mounds whose epitaphs perhaps inspired the innocent *Dominus vobiscum*. Although the church authorities no longer bury here, one of the most pathetic little appeals that a spirit ever knelt before God and man to vouchsafe him, was the last will of this curtlimbed stranger, wherein with a magnanimous grace that was almost ludicrous in all its pathos, he willed to the rector of St. Stephen's his little crutch, and his pouch of literary productions, and begged that estimable gentleman to secure for him the privilege of naming here his last place of repose. And there he lies. Poets greater than he have bent over his grave and spoken words that the hyper-critical might say he was totally unworthy of, and divines and philosophers have done likewise. But the history with its impenetrable estrangement, its ill-defined and meagre outline, which just excites an interest and leaves the real fabric for

the the imagination to weave—this was inevitable. It was like “the little Lady in White”—that melancholy young spirit who haunted Newstead Abbey about the time of Byron’s death, whom Irving immortalized with a sketch so refinedly simple and indulgent. Nobody ever knew the little cripple’s name, nor his nationality. He came and went, whence nor whither, God only knew.”

“That will do for a bit of clay modeling. Thanks for the inspiration, Doctor. I think I will make use of the character.”

“I am glad to hear you speak of your work again, Maynard. God knows I would do you any gracious service that would restore you to your better self again. You seem to be much troubled, my dear fellow; now why do you brood so over the past? Cast it to the dogs; Maynard, and take up the thread where last it left the good broad highway, and become a man, a thinker and a king once more.”

“But, Doc, I am troubled, — very much troubled—”

“And yet, God bless you, Maynard, no one should have greater cause for rejoic-

ing. But cannot I lift the burden if you see fit to confide it?"

"Yes....yes,—at least, I think you can. You have been so kind—so generous and full of sympathy through all my foibles: how dare I be so brazen as to ask further favor at your hand?"

"Never mind the prelude, my dear fellow, never mind the *strophe*, as it were. I am sure I could not forget your interest a moment. I know your heart—go on: speak it."

"Well, to tell the truth, Doctor, I am very much troubled about that piece of modelling at the Academy of which your sisterspeaks so mysteriously. It mystifies me beyond measure, I can assure you."

"Troubled about it?—ah, you art-lovers are such jealous inconsistencies. What is there in that clay modelling at the Academy to give you such concern?"

"Do you really think me jealous of any man's success?—nonsense; you know far better than that. As for this new luminary—if such he really prove—I most warmly congratulate him in my heart, even though I know him not. But I want you to find out all about him

for me. : his place of work, his friends, his promise. If you cannot do this for me, I must go down to the city myself; and, I fear if ever I got back into the clutches of that old-time conventionality, I shall stick there, that is all."

"But do you know anything about the young lady whose portrait it is?"

"How should I?"

"Then wait till the day after to-morrow; she will pay Peggy a visit. You will have an opportunity of prying the secret to your completest satisfaction."

"Come, Doctor, let us sit here no longer. I am restless; let us be gone."

"You're a sort of spleen-fag—a sort of dog of your visions, Maynard. Your brain is literally water-logged with these ugly apprehensions. What under the clouds have you to do with that portrait, anyway, I beg to know? Come; you stay away from the city and your labors down there till I prescribe a change for you. You are in one of your off-guard moods as it were; the sting of a gnaw would poison you; the snarl of a cur crush you."

"Am I such a coward in the conflict?"

“In matters of heart, yes. Your heart dictates the way your world should revolve, and it's generally the opposite way from that your mind and other minds dictate. Come ; take the good old world with an easier grace, a lower pulse, a higher self-esteem, and prouder belief in the autocracy of an earnest effort, even if it yield what the world calls failure. Do n't attempt to reverse the laws of unwilling Nature, who would work all for your soundest good by her best prerogatives, if you will let her alone. It's astonishing how the young heart which should beat in happy unison with Nature, attempts to hasten the universal pulse about a dozen beats just to satisfy it. If most young enthusiasts had their way, they would have the good dame in a sort of cataleptic St. Vitus dance most of the time. Let the good dame alone to her philosophies and her native ways of doing things. You will find that all her machineries are admirably adjusted, and work with just as much haste as the *finesse* of her well-balanced and delicate organism will warrant.”

"Yes, I realize all that, Doctor; but my life has been one strange contrariety to nature in all her health-giving vitalities, at least as convention holds true,—at painful variance with the virtues which others possessing, insure them an unwavering equanimity of spirit and action. I am curst with the weakness of an extremist toward the impossible—"

"And as I said before, you want a balancer to correct all this."

"A what?"

"A balancer: an opposite, quieting quality to companion you, and fix these vibratory humors to one purpose. In other, more intelligible philosophy, Maynard, you want a wife."

"Oh, I do—eh? You seem certain on that point."

"Certain even to dogmatism: you want a wife. And listen now, Maynard, listen to me. I have chosen her for you,—chosen her out of a whole world of good women, I might reasonably affirm,—a sweet, cherishing little creature—"

"I say, Doc, do me the kindness. Listen: I will take your pills without a groan; but I draw a line on you matri-

mony. I will swallow your medicine like a man ; but I take my oath I can't conscientiously marry any of it."

"But listen — listen. You are talking levity — even profanity in the face of so holy a theme —"

"And you are talking madness, Doctor, — simple, unadulterated madness."

"Sit down, Maynard, sit down. There you go again — tearing down the little web of policy and good sense that has caged you in these few days, and made such a man of you. Come now ; listen to me."

"Doctor, I caution you."

"Thanks ; caution is my meat and drink. It's the physician's scripture. What I tell you is your only saving, and you do n't know it. Patience ; this simple task will be its own solving, Maynard. The unnatural tubulence of the sweet waters will find their level again, sleeping at length in the broad arms of an assurance as beautiful as true."

"Doubtless, Doctor, doubtless. But, I say, it's very muggy out ; we better climb the hill again, and join the ladies in a game of whist."....

XV.

The maple grove some distance down the valley from the van Tassel homestead. Mrs. van Tassel and her daughters botanizing, sketching, and discussing the coming visitors who should arrive with the Doctor and Marguerete, according to the instructions, about an hour later than the time of discussion. The flying form of the Doctor seen approaching from a distance, leaping stiles, plunging the thicket, and finally halting hatless and coat-tailed before them.

Wherein develops a startling history of efforts that do not follow their causes.

“Ho! my son — my son! whither are you chasing so like a hound?”

“To find you!”

“Well, you could have hailed us with half the effort. What caused you to change your mind with regard to the hour of coming?”

“I do n’t want to talk about that now, mother, I want to —”

“Do compose yourself, my son; you

are crimson with heat and flurry. Do content yourself long enough to catch your breath. Now, quietly, my son ; what has happened ? ”

“ Everything — everything ! ”

“ Well, what ? Is Miss Riel at the house ? — Come, girls ; let ’s hurry back. ”

“ No, that ’s just what I came to tell you not to do. I want you to stay just where you are. You are not wanted for half an hour yet. ”

“ That ’s a very pungent mystery which requires — ”

“ Yes, it requires several explanatory appendices. Well, sit down on that stump behind you, and I ’ll give it to you. In the first place, we came by the three o ’clock instead of the five o ’clock. Mrs. Riel could n’t accompany us, but intrusted her daughter in Peggy’s and my care. Well, we found the house entirely dispeopled. One would have thought that it had been sacked, plundered, and the household taken prisoners of war. Even Maynard was not to be found in his favorite nook in the library beyond, and so we had naught to do but make our pretty visitor comfortable in the drawing-

room. I offered to run and summon you from your hiding, but Peg intercepted me — said she knew just where to find you, which she did n't. So she excused herself, and left me to entertain Miss Prudence, who took her questionable welcome with all imaginable grace."

"Well?"

"Well, suddenly I heard Maynard's voice in the attic where he has secreted himself at odd times of late, and so I begged Miss Prudence to allow me to follow Meg in the search, promising her to rain the house down upon her."

"And you left her alone?"

"An unpardonable thing which proved fortuitous, let me assure you. I leaped up the stairs to the attic door, and without rapping or announcing myself, I pushed in. No one was there. A half-finished page of manuscript lay on the table, the ink glistened and blotted to my finger-touch, so I was sure that Maynard had been there a moment before. Well, down the stairs I raced again, and out into the garden. No; no one had seen him, the old gardener, nor Jenny making up the dinner bunch of roses. I went

out to Maynard's favorite rose-bush, but he was nowhere to be seen. Then I returned disheartened, plodding along the walk that leads by the drawing-room window. I do not recollect the prompting of the impulse, but passing that open window, I leaned forward and peered within. A surprise greeted me — one of the few surprises of a man's —

"Well, well ; never mind the—"

"Will you be patient? You girls are always spoiling my recitals of interesting events right at the climax. Yes, sir ; there sat Miss Prudence and Maynard face to face, a strange, querying glance in his keen eyes, half bewildered I thought, yet unabashed, as if all this was too severely real to prove a fiction ; and she, with a brave, womanly face upturned to his with an expression of deep, entreating sympathy. Ah, mother, it was a beautiful moment. I simply stood there . . .hello! who's that running this way so like a deer?"

"Why, it's Peggy?"

"What in the world is the matter with her? She seems to be tremendously excited over something."

"Ho! Marguerete,—Marguerete, my child! Why are you tearing yourself to pieces in that way?"

"Mother! — brother! — girls! — he's gone. He can't be found anywhere!"

"Who's gone?"

"Why, Mr. Maynard, of course!"

"Triumph! — triumph! — eloped! — eloped!"

"My son, this is a very undignified example for your sisters. What can you mean?"

"Why she says they're gone!"

"I said, '*he's* gone.' I did n't say that *she* is. Poor girl, she sits there taking this whole mysterious, blundering affair with more grace than I would, now I can tell you."

"Oh, you say *he's* gone, not she. Oh, by Jove! that — eh — rather alters matters, do n't it?"

"So it does, brother."

"By Jove! that man Maynard — I'd like to get at his brain. I'll wager there's something abnormally 'out o' kilter,' as Snooks says, in that man's cranium. Now, look at me! What, ye good saints, am I to do now?"

"Brother, see here. Come aside here ;
I'll tell you what to do."

"Peggy, you're an impertinent little
witch."

"....And, brother, if your conduct in
the future does n't redeem that of the
past, I'll call you a stupid, blind —"

"Nonsense — nonsense !"

XVI.

*A letter of explanation from Maynard to Doctor van
Tassel which somewhat elucidates matters, and
teaches the Doctor a lesson or two in the ethics
of disenchantment of which he seems surprising-
ly ignorant.*

*Whereunto is af-
fixed an innocent
looking addendum
which proves that
love and murder
will out.*

Dear, good Doctor:—
My heart is full of grati-
tude to you for all these
kindnesses which, save by virtue of a
bounty akin to charity, I had no right to
expect from any living being. But, kind-
est, noblest of fellows and most generous

of counsellors, the time has come when I dare not accept more of these bounties from you lest they grow beyond my power of realization. You know there is a point when charity becomes almost a crime in that it implants a moral dependence in the heart of the recipient, which does little honor to the giver and robs his deeds of their best interpretation. And now, dear Doctor, above all, at the present time your goodness almost makes me waver before what I have to confess, and I shrink from the task now so burdensomely imposed ; but duty compels, and like the hero which you have tried to teach me to be — but which, alas, I am not — I will bid all scruples stand aside.

As for effecting reconciliations between Miss Riel and myself at your dear old home—I use the word ‘reconciliation’ for want of the exact word which describes the anomalous character of our relations, Doctor, there was nothing to reconcile, nor to be reconciled. Your remarks and your happy advice, pertinent indeed now that I consider them in the retrospection, only mystified me at the time of your speaking them ; but the moment

I met Miss Riel face to face, all was plain ; and — must I confess so much — I saw what an awful mistake was yours, upon that moment made so very evident. For the dear little lady in question, Doc, let me say that I entertain none other than an interest of sincere respect and admiration. I do *not* love her, my dear good fellow, — I do *not* love her, and what is more, I never did. I admit that my past conduct has somewhat belied this assertion, but I am not responsible for acts committed in fits of aberration, despondency even to insanity, and under the influence of prolonged self-communion in an unbroken solitude. I am a rational enough being if kept in the swim of affairs ; but disaster follows my bound-up melancholy which I have now forsworn forever. I was infatuated with an ideal creature — a mere figment of my morbidly sensitive imagination, of which Miss Riel, I may safely say, was but a clew to the reality. I became disenchanted on a certain night, which I need not recall, and it was proven to me that that devout ministration for whom I fostered such passionate idolatry, was

merely a false light of my mind—a phantom, an illusion,—a foible which the low ebb of my physical condition forced me to believe a reality. Shame—not at my defeat at the hand of Miss Riel, but shame at the realization of what I believed a hopeless insanity—drove me to the undignified extreme which you witnessed, and from which you recovered me. The minute Miss Riel's letter was put into my hands, the ideal vanished ; the flesh, and blood and good sense, the realization of which I then embraced, disenchanted me.

Dear Doctor, do not ignore this confession. You know the human mind—make a study of it under all conditions of repose and impulse. You are a philosopher, and can reason these psychological whims which I, though I cannot reason, can experience to my utmost misfortune. To surround a mortal with the divinity of an angel was my crime ; not the paragon of womanly grace would have sufficed in its stead. God bless you, Doctor. You have saved my life, and what is greater, have made a man of me. My heart is full of gratitude to you ; if I have done aught that proves disappointing,

consider my foibles with generosity and lenience ; but I do not love Prudence, and I never can. Come to me, Doctor. Let me look into your good face, and confide all to you. This paper seems so cold and reproachful ; I must not say more lest you misinterpret me.

MAYNARD.

P. S. (*In pencil*) Midnight.

My dear, good friend :—

I cannot have the heart to keep the secret from you longer. I am engaged to your sister, Marguerete.....

MAYNARD.

XVII.

A nook in the garden of the van Tassel homestead. Mrs. van Tassel with the arm of Miss Kiel familiarly drawn through her's, saunters down the gravel walks endeavoring to wake that non-committal young lady into a transparent mood.

Wherein Miss Kiel proposes a silent toast to an absent one, in the memory dear.

"Well, child, I think we have walked far enough; do n't you? I have shown you the newest fashion in roses, and heard your comment upon the new orchids sent us from Ceylon. I think now we had better seat ourselves upon this settee, Miss Prudence, and rest ourselves. What do you think?"

"You are very kind, Mrs. van Tassel, to show me these lovely things in which I delight no less than you, be assured. Some day I hope to enjoy such things myself in my own humble way. City life is not the least congenial to me these days."

"No; I fancy you would thrive on better advantage in direct contact with nature, the more direct the better. How have you spent your time since your last visit some ten days since? Have you

been more than usually busy?"

"Not more than superficially so. To tell the truth, the delicious glimpse of the country enjoyed while here on my visit, quite spoiled me for the housed-up artificial routine of city life. I do wish I could have persuaded mamma to come up with me; but Jack is such a dependent fellow without one of us at home."

"I wish she had accompanied you; but perhaps we can persuade her to come up during July when your brother goes to France. By the by; have you seen Mr. Maynard very often since your return?"

"Mr. Maynard?...."

"Yes; the sculptor. Ah, my child, do n't be afraid to speak of him to me. I will keep your secrets."

"Indeed, Mrs. van Tassel, I do not exactly understand you, I must confess. Your remark at the dinner-table last night too, — I am afraid it hurt me just a little. I hope you have not misconstrued matters between Mr. Maynard and myself."

"Oh, dear, no; and is it possible that I offended you, my dear child? — I beg your forgiveness most humbly. I certainly would be guilty of no impertinence,

nor handle with indiscreet levity that which you hold so sacred. I do wish you could confide in me even as a daughter. These affairs are so mysterious, and above all I fear mystery. Of course if I thought less of you, I would take less interest in your welfare. As it is, anything that is in my power to add to the measure of your days is gladly sought for, and devoutly blest you. I did not mean an impertinence by my remark, you will be charitable enough to believe that ; but it did pique me just a little to see Mr. Maynard cast you aside so rudely."

"Me?—he cast me aside, Mrs. van Tassel? Oh, you cannot possibly mean that."

"Well, Miss Prudence, I—I really must confess defeat. These affairs are so without light for my my poor, old-fashioned eyes that I—"

"Really, Mrs. van Tassel ; do you think that I love Mr. Maynard?—and is this what all the mystery is about?"

"My dear child, affairs of love are inviolable secrets usually till a ring such as you bear on your finger, bids all the world be enlightened, and bless you. I really thought it pardonable to speak of Mr.

Maynard when the affairs were thus announced."

"Mrs. van Tassel, you must not remain in the dark any longer. I do not love Mr. Maynard, and moreover, I never did. He wrote me a very strange letter once, and modelled my portrait in some inexplicable way, and all too before I had spoken a word to him. On meeting him I saw that the enchantment, if such he had, vanished; and he vanished with it. But—but let us say no more about the young sculptor, now, Mrs. van Tassel. Besides, I have no right to speak of him now in no other than disinterested, friendly terms, for—see! here's a locket with a picture in it. Tell me; do you know that face?"

"Bless my soul!—Prudence—child—you quite unnerve me; indeed you do. Where are my glasses? I'm afraid I left them—no, here they are. Why, that picture—let me take it closer—why bless me! if that is n't my son, the dear rascal...."

THE END.

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